

## **Families and Communities Together (FACT)**

### **Counties in Area:**

Adair County  
Adams County  
Guthrie County  
Madison County  
Union County

### **Contact for Area:**

Brenda Meisenheimer  
P.O. Box 351  
Greenfield, IA 50849  
641-743-9911  
brenmeis@mddc.com

### **Vision and Mission:**

Our Vision: Families and Communities Together (FACT) will achieve a productive and sustainable future. The mission of the FACT Empowerment Area is to enhance the educational opportunities of children 0-5 years, to educate and support parents in the parenting role, enhance quality education at home, in child care and in the preschool setting, and provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

The FACT Board plans to meet the needs of children 0-5 and their families while meeting the specific goals set by legislature. Priority will be given to enhancing the education of children 0-5, educate parents and support parenting skills, enhance quality education in preschool settings, and provide a safe environment for children.

### **Local Indicators:**

Parents as Teachers: Number of age appropriate developmental activities; Crisis Child Care: provide a safe and nurturing environment for children; Immunization Program: maintain percentage of 90% of infants and children 0-2 who are current according to state immunization guidelines; Child Net Provider Training: increase in registered day care providers with a focus on quality care, Preschool Enhancement: children enrolled in preschool showing progress in growth of skills, percentage of children (3-5) gaining an awareness of a correlation of speech and writing, percentage of children visiting each center will increase and each child will gain skills to prepare them for kindergarten, percentage of collaboration with other preschools.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The FACT Board has funded: Parents as Teachers, a free home visitation program providing support and education to parents; Crisis Child Care, free short-term child care to children whose families are experiencing a crisis or emergency and lack adequate child care for their children; Immunizations, provided to children to keep them free and safe of the diseases they are treated for; Every Child Reads, training to enhance children's literacy development; Provider Training, training offered to early childhood child care providers to promote the quality and

professionalism of a safe and healthy child care setting; and Preschool Enhancement, by providing educational materials, and other supplies and support. This commitment will help achieve these results: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families, and safe and nurturing child care environments.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

Adair, Adams, and Union Counties have joined together to fund the Crisis Child Care Program.

Adair and Union Counties have joined together to fund and participate in an Outcomes Assessment Training bringing together providers, board members, preschools and others in continued collaboration. Adams County was also involved in the planning process for the Outcomes Training.

Empowerment board members attend other planning meetings in the county, such as, Board of Supervisors, Health Coalition, Board of Health, Success4Kids, Inner Agency meetings, Decat, other communities activities and come together to report activities back to others.

The public is invited to the monthly meetings through postings, radio announcements and newspaper notices.

FACT Board researches available resources provided in the community to determine the areas needs. The FACT Empowerment Board, Iowa State University Extension, Adair County Home Care/Hospital, and West Central Mental Health have worked together to provide funding and planning for the Adair County Needs Assessment Survey to be completed soon. There was also initial collaboration with Union County Empowerment.

## Adams County Empowerment Area

### Contact for Area:

Kathleen Peckham  
Alegent Health Family Home Care  
P.O. Box 344  
Corning, IA 50841  
Phone: 641-322-6283  
FAX: 641-322-5177  
Email: kpeckham@alegent.org

### Vision and Mission:

The vision of the Adams County Empowerment Area (ACEA) is to enhance the quality of life in Adams County by promoting strong, healthy families. Barriers continue to be overcome and programs and services coordinated through community collaboration.

### Overview of Community Plan:

Every family faces its own set of challenges. Parents must work to provide for the needs of their children. These needs include guidance and material goods. Time, money and environment all play a role in their ability to address these needs. The demands placed on the family by society may not take into consideration the family's shortfalls in education, socialization, support networks, and income. Service providers, schools, and citizens must and will be challenged to be sensitive to the individual and unique qualities of each family when planning programs with them. Our community plan addresses the wide spectrum of children's first schoolhouse, their home and community, while providing individual and unique supports to families.

### Local Indicators:

Enhanced parent/child education and communication, increased school readiness, and safe nurturing childcare environments.

- ◆ Utilization of Parents as Teachers (PAT), the Early Childhood Resource Library (ECRL), or Crisis Child Care
- ◆ Retention of parenting information acquired through PAT home visits
- ◆ Children receiving PAT visits successfully reaching appropriate milestones as shown by developmental screenings.
- ◆ # of successful referrals to parent support programs
- ◆ Available child care slots with registered providers
- ◆ # of providers participating in professional development programs
- ◆ Immunization rate of children under 2 years of age

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

**School Ready Programs:** Crisis Child Care, Early Childhood Resource Library, Hearts & Hugs Monitoring Program, Parents as Teachers, \* Prescott Preschool playground Expansion Program.

\*Program funded at the end of FY 02

**Early Childhood Programs:** Provider Literacy and Language Development Workshops

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

**Crisis Child Care** received ACEA support beginning in August 2000. Despite the best efforts of any community, families may find themselves in crisis situations due to stress, health emergencies, employment or family dysfunction. Or lack of natural supports. As part of the ACEA efforts, families have the opportunity to resolve crisis and emergencies while their children receive quality care in the home of a registered day care provider. Families utilizing the Crisis Child Care service providers are further encouraged to re-evaluate their support systems and are linked with service providers that can help them successfully plan for future emergency situations.

The Crisis Child Care Program is the result of a concentrated collaboration between the three counties comprising the Decategorization region. The program has faced major funding set backs with the elimination of Decat funding, the ineligibility for further Safe and Stable Families funds, and the loss of a host agency all within the past year. The county collaborative has addressing all these issues, and the area commitment to the program remains strong.

**The Early Childhood Resource Library** houses materials including developmental toys, books, puzzles, parenting books and videos, and resource manuals. The library boasts that these items are adult/child interactive, "no batteries allowed." The library serves as a "one-stop shop" to connect parents with needed services and agencies. Families or providers may drop in and play, borrow items for extended use, or participate in scheduled community events. Activities that promote children's physical, intellectual, social-emotional, and language skills are available. Focus is on modeling effective caregiver interaction and teaching appropriate developmental levels and expectations.

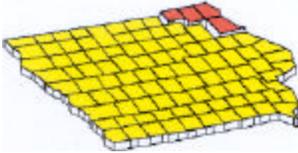
In a collaborative effort to reduce duplication and fully utilize community services the Women and Infant Clinic (WIC) moved their monthly services to the site housing the ECRL. This allows parents to conduct their business at WIC while their children participate in educational activities at the library. The ECRL served 167 families in the past year.

**Hearts & Hugs Day Care** is the only licensed day care facility in the county. The daycare is located on a major highway. Parents using the facility expressed concerns about safety conditions that might arise from the location and accessibility of the daycare to passing strangers. The daycare used Empowerment funding to implement a safety plan including door alarms and a video monitoring system that allows staff to see the individuals entering the building before they reach the areas where the children are located.

**Parents as Teachers** is housed with the Early Childhood Resource Library. Two parent educators have conducted home visits with 3 families in the past year. Each child enrolled in the program receives a developmental screening upon enrollment, at six months of age, and around each birthday. Referrals are made when delays are detected. Another aspect of the program is the referrals families receive when they need "connected" with service providers. By building a large support system for families, these individuals feel more secure in their ability to successfully parent their children. Caregiver/ child interaction and attachment is monitored with the use of the HOME observation tool.

Parents as Teachers implemented a Reading Is Fundamental program this year. The local preschools collaborated to establish lending libraries at each of their sites and participated in book give distributions.

**Provider Literacy and Language Development Workshops** brought registered and unregistered providers to the training table to learn everyday methods to promote children's language and literacy skills. Providers practiced these methods, designed literacy kits, and brainstormed on methods to incorporate language and literacy skills into every aspect of their everyday operations. The providers received incentives for attendance.



**HAWC Empowerment/Decat Area**  
*"How all children win."*

*1111 Paine St., Suite H*  
*Hawkeye Plaza*  
**Decorah, IA 52101**  
**(563) 382-4447**  
**(563) 382-1870 FAX**

**Counties in Area:**

Allamakee, Clayton, Howard, and Winneshiek

**Contact for Area :**

Nancy Everman  
1111 Paine St. Suite H  
Decorah, IA 52101  
Phone: (563)382-4447  
FAX: (563)382-1870  
Email: [hawcne@netins.net](mailto:hawcne@netins.net)  
Web: [www.hawc-iowa.com](http://www.hawc-iowa.com)

**Vision and Mission:**

Our mission is that all children and families from birth to all ages have their basic needs met, all children know unconditional love, all people have the same opportunities, that diversity is valued, expressed and experienced, and education is offered in diverse ways to all.

By promoting collaboration among our rural small communities, everyone in the HAWC region has access to important information and directs the services needed. Services are community-based, easily accessible, family-centered, promote self-sufficiency, emphasize prevention and intervention, and focus on safety and well-being for all citizens, especially our children. *Revised July, 2002*

**Overview of the Community Plan:**

The HAWC Empowerment/Decat Area initiative focuses on children, youth and families. The result areas include: Healthy Children and Youth, Safe and Nurturing Families, Children Ready to Succeed in School, Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments, and Safe and Supportive Communities.

**Local Indicators:**

We are just finishing the process of an in-depth needs assessment that will provide us with accessibly local indicators. We will visit assessment annually and update every three years. In addition, the HAWC Area is writing a strategic plan. During this year we hold summit and develop 5-8 results areas that can be used by all organizations.

**Primary Services Provided with Empowerment (E), Decat (D), Juvenile Justice (J), Grant Funding (G), and Past Funding (P):**

**Empowerment Programs    Decat Programs**

HAWC Healthy Families Home Visitors (E)  
FAST: Baby and Pre-School (E)  
Circle Communications (E)  
Kindermusik (E)  
Child Care Initiatives (E)  
    Quality Assessments  
    Tier 2 Assistance  
    Revolving Loan Fund  
    Star Providers  
Pre-School Initiatives (E)  
    Grants  
    Head Start Slots  
    Keeland

FAST: Elementary (P)  
Family Circle Communications (D) (J) Family  
Positive Connect. Intervention Center (JG)  
Girls on the Move (G)

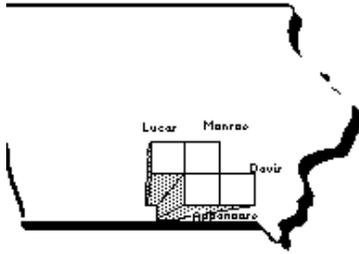
**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

This past year has been challenging for all organizations. It has been difficult to close down programs that are successful and providing prevention and intervention services to our children, youth and families. HAWC Advisory and the Board of Directors have taken the stance that this also an opportunity time of developing supportive relationships.

At this time we have 10 cross-sectional teams working; including program/project evaluations, grant writing, and strategic planning, Monthly Advisory Team meetings are providing support, creative thinking time, and building new partnerships.

Our Children's First Pilot Project closed the end of June. However, the board chose to move this project in with Family Circle Communications. We have four certified mediators who can work with families. We will be a pilot for FASr with a BABY FAST program in '03, the rural organization to pilot this program.

We were chosen to be pilot for the State Agencies Working Group through the Committee for State Youth Development Task Force for an area wide needs assessment. We partnered with several state agencies, Luther College, and ISU Extension to complete this study. We are now working on a combine plan for the funding sources for FY 03. In addition, we are in the process of complete a 3 year strategic plan for the HAWC Area.



## A.D.L.M. Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area:

Appanoose County  
Davis County  
Lucas County  
Monroe County

### Contact for Area:

Jack Maletta  
Coordinator Centerville Cluster Decat Project  
P.O. Box 488  
Centerville, IA 52544  
Phone (641) 437-4450 Fax (641) 437-4089  
e-mail jmalett@dhs.state.ia.us

### Vision and Mission:

All families living within the A.D.L.M. Empowerment Area will have an opportunity to live in a healthy, nurturing, safe environment. This will allow for all individuals to grow to their fullest potential and become productive and contributing members of society. It is the vision of this Empowerment Area that through community partnering unnecessary barriers will be reduced to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health, and human services programs.

By fostering collaboration among agencies and communities within the four county area communications will be improved, unnecessary barriers to community efforts will be reduced, and resources utilized more efficiently and effectively.

### Overview of Community Plan:

The School Ready Component of the original community plan was concentrated in implementing the Parents As Teachers program. The original plan was to serve only children from birth to age three. We have recently expanded the services on a limited basis to children ages four and five.

The Early Childhood Component of the community plan strives to improve the availability and quality of childcare and preschool resources in the four county area. We have provided funding assistance to existing providers to update equipment and facilities to improve the quality of childcare and preschool. Funded increased contact hours and availability of preschool. Newly implemented programs involve health consultations and enhanced recruiting and training efforts.

### Local Indicators:

Current activities have been implemented to address the following local indicators:

- Percentage of children identified for special education will decline.
- Average skill levels of children entering school in kindergarten or first grade will improve.
- Average skill levels of third grade students will improve.
- Average daily attendance rate of children, grades K-3 will improve.
- Number of student contact hours of low income three and four-year-old children in Head Start will increase.
- Percentage of kindergarten students that attend preschool will improve.
- Number of licensed/registered childcare slots will increase.
- Number of hours of licensed/registered/non-regulated provider participation in training will increase.
- Number of accredited or licensed preschool slots will increase.
- Percentage of registered/licensed childcare providers/childcare slots shall grow relative to the number of unregistered.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

- ❖ Parents As Teachers -- Home visitor program designed to empower all parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Provides assistance in designing and implementing programs of developmentally appropriate activities for all children. Also provides the system of network support for participating parents.
- ❖ Health Consultations -- Projects that involve Public Health Nursing in all four counties offering health consultation to existing childcare providers and the A.D.L.M. Environmental Health Office providing environmental health and safety consultation to childcare providers.
- ❖ Childcare Recruitment and Training -- In collaboration with the community action programs in Lucas and Monroe Counties we are providing one child care recruiter and trainer in those two counties. In addition through a partnership of Child Care Resource and Referral and Southern Iowa Economic Development Association, a child care recruiter is being provided in Appanoose and Davis Counties.
- ❖ Child Care Provider Training -- Several child care providing training opportunities were provided with A.D.L.M. support during this year. 1,034 person hours of training was provided with direct funding from A.D.L.M. It is our goal to continue to provide training especially that designed to provide Child Net Certification to the provider participants and assist child care centers to reach a 6 rating on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS).

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Our Parents As Teachers program has been providing in-home visits since April of 1999. Each county is served by an educator with an average caseload of 30 families. During the last year the program served a total of 226 children, 102 of whom were identified as "high needs". The 4 educators performed a total of 1861 home visits. A total of 25 group activities provided the 65 participating families with social interaction with other families, insight on development, creative play with their children and adult support. Each family is afforded the opportunity to have their children participate in developmental screening designed to provide early detection of developmental problems and referral for appropriate services. 122 children were screened with 26 referred for follow-up services. Families are also provided with community resource guides to help them identify and utilize other services provided in their communities that meet their needs.

Our efforts to improve the availability and quality of childcare and private preschool services in our four county area have affected the lives of more than 700 children in our area. These children enjoyed healthier environments and more modern and developmentally appropriate activities. 84 children received scholarships to attend private preschools. These children, in all likelihood, would not have attended preschool without the scholarships. In addition, the number of class contact hours was increased for Head Start four-year old classes serving 60 children. There were 199 additional training contacts totaling 1,034 total hours of training participation by child care providers in our area.

In collaboration with public health services we are continuing to provide programs to make our childcare facilities healthier places. The Public Health Nursing services in each county provide health consultations for childcare providers and also participate in providing health oriented training workshops.

In an effort to increase the availability of childcare we are collaborating with Child Care Resource and Referral and the community action programs serving our area to recruit and train new childcare providers.

**Partnerships 4 Families**  
**Audubon Carroll Greene and Guthrie Counties**  
**Cindy Duhrkopf, Coordinator**  
Region XII COG 1009 E Anthony  
Carroll, Iowa 51401  
712.792.9914 Fax 712.792.1751  
[cduhrkopf@region12cog.org](mailto:cduhrkopf@region12cog.org)  
[www.region12cog.org/p4f](http://www.region12cog.org/p4f)

**Vision:**

All families living within the Partnership 4 Families Empowerment Area will be physically and emotionally healthy, having access to quality child care and intellectual stimulation in their children's early years. These strong families will in turn demonstrate intra-familial interaction and assertive parenting skills, contributing to the success and well being of their communities.

**Mission:**

Our mission is to utilize communities, parents, local government, health and human service agencies, child care providers, and schools to better organize existing collaborative efforts, delivering services that promote early childhood education, improve health status and decrease the rate of occurrence of child abuse and neglect, while increasing parental involvement and support.

**Overview of Community Plan:**

The Partnerships 4 Families Empowerment Area plan centers on the improvement of quality childcare, improvement of school readiness and the health of all children 0-5. With the third year, of funding to our area we continued to support our charter programs of HOPES, Early Head Start and the Partnerships 4 Families Child Care Project. Our community plan seeks to expand beyond our charter programs to offer assistance to preschool programs to increase quality of education and slots available to low income families. In FY02 we were able to meet this need and expand it into FY03. During FY03 we will reevaluate our plan and look for other areas to strengthen in our CEA.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

**Charter Programs:** (Programs that started our Empowerment Area)

- ◆ HOPES, Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success, Home Visitation Program for any family with a child 0-5
- ◆ Early Head Start, a Home Visitation Program for families living below 100% poverty, Federally funded program with 32 additional slots funded with Partnerships 4 Families funding with children age 0-3.
- ◆ P4F Child Care Project, comprised of a Child Care Social Worker and Child Care Home Consultant
- ◆ Board and Area Resource Management

**Additional Funded Programs in FY02**

- ◆ P4F Preschool Tuition and Transportation Assistance
- ◆ P4F Literacy Program involving 21 community libraries
- ◆ Stork's Nest, a program for prenatal and postnatal mothers
- ◆ Lead Screening Program, provides screenings to children who are at risk for high lead exposure

- ◆ Full Circle Parenting provided training to area staff on three research based ISU Parenting Programs; area staff implemented the programs with their work or in a group setting.
- ◆ FaDSS, Families Developing Self Sufficiency works with FIP families in setting self sufficiency goals
- ◆ DHS Foster Care Coordinator works with recruitment and retention of foster families and their needs.
- ◆ Mini Grants were also awarded to preschools in our area to increase slots for pre-school children of low-income families. Daycare Centers received mini grants to expand their hours to offer non-traditional hours for families working non-traditional hours.

We are proud of the fact that in our Empowerment Area all of our funded programs are serving families in all four counties. Collaboration across counties lines is a focus of stretching our funding further and offering our programs to as many families as possible.

**Local Indicators:**

(Update in FY03 to better serve our area)

1. Increase health status of children (emotional, social, physical, and intellectual)
2. Increase parent/care provider involvement with their children to encourage intellectual stimulation of very young children.
3. Create safe and stable families
4. Increase School Readiness and Success of Young Children
5. Increase quality, availability and accessibility of childcare

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Scuccesses:**

The theme of our year was to evaluate and refocus our collaborative efforts in our area. Through the use of Technical Assistance funding our area came together to evaluate the outcomes of our Empowerment area programs. Each funded program attended the training to learn how to measure and evaluate the outcomes of their program. As a result of the training each program is able to report outcomes in addition to outputs.

Our area then came together as a group to evaluate our current indicators and redefine them to better fit the needs in our area. As a group we were able to find the focus of our programs and evaluate similar outcomes to gain a better overall vision of what outcomes we are striving to meet. These collaborative efforts allowed us to look at duplication of services and family identified gaps that exist in funded programs. As we refocused our efforts we became a stronger collaborative of programs working together for the good of area children and families.

As we refocused we defined areas that we need to work on for the coming year. We discovered that after three years of funding it was time to look at where we had been and evaluate the direction we are going. This effort of collaboration along with the many successes of our individual programs made Partnerships 4 Families a stronger and more unified Empowerment Area.



**Contact for Area:**

Heidi Pearson  
Benton County Empowerment  
303 First Avenue  
P.O. Box 516  
Vinton, Iowa 52349  
319/472-4543  
hpearson@prairieinet.net

**Vision and Mission:**

It is the vision of the Benton County Empowerment Board that families and children living in Benton County will lead happy and productive lives, utilizing services that are available. Benton County citizens will collaborate in planning for services that are needed but are not available in the areas of education, health and human services. All individuals will have the opportunity to develop to their full potential and become successful in school and life.

It is our mission to oversee and coordinate collaborative service for children and families living in or attending school, daycare or preschool services in Benton County. The emphasis is delivering service to children 0-5 years of age. The long-term mission is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services in the areas of education, health and human services for persons of all ages by creating community collaboration and avoiding duplication of services.

**Overview of Community Plan:**

The Benton County Empowerment Area Community Plan includes four primary goals. The first goal is that all children have access to affordable, quality daycare and preschool programming. The number of slots available has increased with the opening of a new childcare center in Vinton as well as new in-home providers starting to offer care. We will continue to encourage centers to become accredited with NAEYC. The second goal is to assure that Benton County families will have current, accurate knowledge about the variety of health, education and human service resources available to them. We will continue to decrease duplication of services by agencies providing the service programs. To assure that all parents will have access to the education and training resources necessary to appropriately prepare their children for kindergarten is the third goal. The final goal of our plan is to review programs to ensure 100% participation in evaluation and review of results. We have focused on removing transportation barriers for parents and children 0-5 so they have access to appropriate health, education and human service resources in the past, but that does not seem to be an issue in our county at this time.

**Local Indicators:**

- 2 Number of providers attending provider education classes.
- 2 Number of low-income children being served in all centers in Benton County.
- 2 Increase in usage of programs funded by empowerment by a higher percentage of the parents with young children.
- 2 100% of all programs funded by empowerment both agency and family consumer, will fill out evaluation forms.

- 2 Percentage of children entering kindergarten not ready to learn compared to the percentage of students who begin school ready to learn.
- 2 Number of confirmed child abuse/neglect cases in the county.
- 2 Reading proficiency level of fourth grade students in the county will improve by 2006.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The primary services which were funded with Empowerment dollars in FY '02 included scholarship availability for daycare, preschool, licensed centers for low income families. Six centers applied for and received funding, which assisted in filling otherwise empty slots. We will offer an additional opportunity for scholarship funds in the fall. The Child Care Resource Coordinator has been actively meeting with licensed, registered and non-registered providers in the county and has provided resource information to the providers as well as parents and families and continues to work on building a data base of provider and family names. The coordinator also works closely with the Area Education Association and local schools. Funding was provided for one session of a Parent Support Group, which included six weekly meetings. In addition to this, the Empowerment Area continues its contract with the Young Parents Network who offer the Parents As Teachers home visitation program that continues to expand the number of families it serves. Empowerment has also offered educational opportunities to all providers, preschool and Kindergarten teachers as well as mini-grants for equipment to licensed and registered providers throughout the county. The Benton County Every Child Reads team hosted a series of six classes in both Vinton and Belle Plaine to providers throughout the county. Approximately 30 providers participated and 19 attended all six sessions. The instructors were members of the team from Grant Wood AEA. The program was revised from the state version to better suit providers in the county. Overall the program was highly rated by those attending and follow-up visits to those participating centers and homes are planned in the near future.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes :**

The greatest strides forward this year have been the collaboration efforts of education with the existing community resources and the focus of both groups toward recognizing and meeting the needs of families with children 0-5 year of age.

The Parent Support Group, which was held in October, had several different families participating. Empowerment hired individuals from Grant Wood AEA to facilitate these meetings. Childcare workers from Happytime Child Development Center helped with the children and the center prepared the evening meal. After compiling the results of the surveys that were provided to the participants, it was noted that the individuals felt they had benefited from attending these classes and may have an interest in attending future classes to gain new ideas on parenting. Empowerment will reassess the value of offering this program in this format.

The Child Development Fair held in the Benton Community School District, coordinated largely by the Child Care Resource Coordinator recruited service providers throughout the county to staff booths providing information to parents. Individuals from Grant Wood AEA were also available to provide assessments of children who attended the fair that day.

The Parents As Teachers program has been building a caseload and the program coordinator regularly attends county coalition of service providers meetings. This environment provides an excellent opportunity for networking with other organizations in Benton County.



# Cedar Valley's Promise

---

*“Uniting for the Love of Our Children”*

Mentor Protect Nurture Teach Serve

## **Counties in Area:**

Black Hawk County

## **Contact for Area:**

Janet Lyons  
P.O. Box 7500  
Waterloo, IA 50704-7500  
Phone: 319-291-2603  
FAX: 319-291-2619  
Email: [jlyons1@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:jlyons1@dhs.state.ia.us)

## **Vision:**

Each individual in the Cedar Valley will achieve their maximum potential living in our safe, healthy, supportive, community.

## **Mission:**

“Parents, families, and communities, *united for the love of our children*, will be informed and wholly involved in nurturing our children to ensure access to resources needed for optimal development.”

## **Overview of Community Plan and Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

1. Expand Early Head Start Home-based services to an additional 120 families.
  - The local Early Head Start program is called Project Hand-in-Hand. It is a family-centered home visitation program. Intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services are provided on a weekly, basis year round, to low-income families with children under age three and to pregnant women. The project links programs for children and parenting support with adult-oriented services such as job training or adult education for parents, and promotes positive outcomes for both children and parents within the context of a family-centered approach to services delivery. Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. oversees this collaborative project. This project is funded by the School Ready Empowerment funding and Early Head Start grant.
2. Improvement and expansion of accessible, high quality child care:  
Through this initiative Cedar Valley’s Promise will:
  - Improve existing child care
    1. Every Child Reads Initiative
    2. Inclusive Child Care Initiative
    3. Healthy Child Care Iowa

4. ChildNet
5. Welcome to Child Care
6. Child and Adult Care Food Program

- Attract additional care providers into the field and train them
- Assist child care providers in obtaining registration
- Assist child care providers in starting or expanding their services
- Encourage child care providers to seek accreditation

This project is targeted toward the 797 existing childcare providers (266 registered and 531 unregistered) and to potential new providers in Black Hawk County. ChildCare Resource and Referral of Northeast Iowa (CCR&R) oversees this collaborative project. This project is funded by the Early Childhood Services funding.

#### **Local Indicators:**

- Raise the basic skill level of our children.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of childcare.
- Improve the health of children in Black Hawk County.
- Decrease the incidence of child abuse and neglect.
- Increase the early intellectual stimulation of very young children.
- Increase the access of children and families to an adult mentor.
- Raise the basic skill level of our children.

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

**Celebrate Reading! Celebrate Song!:** Collaborative effort within Cedar Valley's Promise that raised \$10,000.00 for the three Early Childhood Community Literacy Programs, Every Child Reads, Reach Out and Read, and Traveling Tales. The celebration was held in conjunction this year with Sturgis Falls Days in Cedar Falls, IA. We had guest readers and every child left the event with a new book.

**Early Childhood Community Forum:** On May 20, 2001 the Cedar Valley's Promise Early Childhood Committee sponsored a community Summit focusing on the current state of early care and education in the Cedar Valley. Action plans for achieving early care and education goals were discussed. Linda Lewis, regional administrator for the Administration of Children and Families, Region 7, Department of Health and Human Services was featured. She discussed what communities need to provide high quality early care and education.

**Other Highlights:** Every Child Reads pilot in Cedar Valley Area, trained providers to emphasize literacy in classrooms and provided trainees with books for children. Over 300 early care and education providers have learned strategies to use with the children they care for that will prepare them to be ready to learn. Pilot parent training modules began with over 100 parents participating in four hours of literacy training.

# Boone County Empowerment Area

## Contact for Area

Sara Behn, Coordinator  
Department of Human Services - 900 West Mamie Eisenhower Avenue, Boone, IA 50036  
Phone (515) 433-0593 Ext. 233 Fax (515) 432-2480 E-mail [sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us)

## Vision and Mission:

Through the creation of the Boone County Empowerment Board, we are better able to enhance our county's ability to develop and sustain a nurturing and supportive community culture that is committed to all citizens, especially our children. Our mission is to provide outreach to all families in the Boone County Empowerment Area in order to improve their access to opportunities, resources, and supports needed to build strong and healthy families. We strive to create and sustain a unified system of education, health, and social services. Our long range goal is to support all families in meeting their children's emotional, physical, and social needs which are essential stepping stones to maximizing each child's learning potential.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The program initiatives are designed to maximize and build on the resources already present in the county. This will ensure a collaborative and efficient service system to avoid any potential duplication. A full service community Family Resource Center is being developed for grand opening in 2003. The Center responds to the immediate needs of the community including: Head Start, expanding the program from two half-day programs, to two full time classrooms; an accredited infant and child care center, will likely operate non-traditional hours and additional preschool services; and Adult Day Services, a program to be operated by the Boone County Hospital to provide respite care for caregivers and their loved ones. These programs will be accessible by any family in Boone County. Currently, the vision is close to becoming a reality. Two years ago, a professional consultant assessed the community's support and the response was positive. Since then, the project has been awarded a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant through the Iowa Department of Economic Development, and Boone County Empowerment has obtained 501(c)(3) legal non-profit status. Last year, the City of Boone passed the intent to take ownership of the Center, and has committed \$500,000 from a private trust that was intended for the construction of a human services facility in Boone County. The City has also made available \$400,000 as a challenge grant for raising private funds. An option has been exercised for 4.9 acres on which the center will be built. Over the past fiscal year, the planning committee has transitioned into the fundraising campaign organization. We anticipate breaking ground in the Spring of 2003 and completion in early winter of 2003.

The Boone Empowerment Area is currently seeking redesignation for another 3-year period. The successes of the programs are beginning to take shape through outcome measures. The Empowerment Board is anxious to see the structured outcomes results this year as provided through technical assistance with University of Iowa, School of Social Work.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding and Local Indicators:

### Lack of outreach and screening for pregnant and post-partum women and their families

A high teen birth rate - In 1995, the teen birth rate was higher than the state average of 10.9%.

Child abuse rates - In 1994, there were 64 documented, founded cases of child abuse, resulting in a rate higher than the state average. In 1995, there were another 65 founded cases.

Percentage of low birth weight infants - The percentage of infants who are born at a low birth weight has increased steadily from 4.2% in 1994, to 5.2% in 1995, and most recently, 9.7% in 1996.

Immunization rates at age 2 - The percentage of fully immunized two-year-olds has increased steadily during the 1900's, to a reported coverage of 98% for 1996.

Incidence of infants born affected by drugs, alcohol and tobacco - Close to 17% of all infants born in Boone County in 1996 were exposed pre-natally to maternal smoking. In the nine months (9/97-6/98) that the Healthy Futures Program was screening pregnant women, 26% reported having used drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes in the past month.

Percentage of mothers not receiving prenatal care in the first trimester - In Boone County, there are approximately 35-40 infants born each year without the benefit of the early screening.

### Need for programs and day care options that provide safe environments and quality learning/ development

On-going waiting list for entrance into Head Start

Percentage of kindergarten students identified as not "school-ready" on social, cognitive, and emotional development assessments - In two school districts, this percentage was greater than 25%, meaning more than one quarter of kindergartners were not "school ready".

A general shortage of available/affordable day care options, especially for children ages 0-2 from working families

Children ages 0-5 with both parents in the labor force - For 70% of preschool children who live with both parents, both parents are in the labor force; for 67% of preschool children living in single parent families, their single parent is in the labor force.

Support needed for Infant Care Providers and a need for professionalization/increase in status of child care workers – A provider survey reported a need for more training about infants and specialized care and assistance with acquiring needed equipment. Technical assistance in financial management and problem solving as well as better pay were also recommended.

### **Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

Center for Child Care Resources – The Provider Services/Infant Care Coordinator provides professional support to in-home child care providers and recruits new persons willing to provide in-home infant and toddler care. The Coordinator assists the providers to better the quality of their business through professional development classes and conferences. Recently, the Infant Network was established as a method of motivating in-home providers to become registered with the State of Iowa and open more infant slots in the Boone County Empowerment Area.

Healthy Futures – Every pregnant woman in Boone County is eligible to participate in by responding to a questionnaire at her doctor's prenatal appointment. The mothers have the opportunity to receive home visits from a nurse who is able to address the new mother's concerns regarding the baby's development and nutrition. The Family Development Specialist provides additional support to the family to provide on-going home visitation, goal-setting assistance, parent education, and connecting them with existing resources in the community.

Building Blocks Preschool – "Building a firm foundation for future success" is the motto of the Building Blocks Preschool. The Teacher and the Teacher Associate address important areas such as social skills, academics, nutrition, dental health, family and arts. A Family Advocate provides support through home visits twenty-nine (29) hours per week. A family would qualify if their income falls at or below 185% of the poverty level.

"Wrap-around" Child Care Services – The Building Blocks Preschool works closely with New Horizons Child Care Center in order to accommodate parents who work full time. The parents are able to drop off their children at the child care center as early as 6 A.M. The children are then transported to preschool from 8:15 A.M. to 2:15 P.M. The children are transported back to the child care center where they can stay until 6 P.M.

\*Grand Community School District in Boxholm – The Empowerment Board awarded the Preschool in Grand a one time grant of \$5,000 for transportation costs. Boxholm is located in the far Northwest corner of the county making it a very rural area. Children are bussed in from miles away, and even another county, making transportation an enormous expense.

\*Ogden Head Start – There was an identified need in Ogden to provide a preschool opportunity to low income families. Drake Head Start operates most of the program, however, the school district is expected to implement a portion of funds. The Empowerment Board felt it was necessary to assist this program in keeping with the mission of providing services to all families in Boone County, especially the rural location.

Planning Services – The Board has contracted with Hartsook and Associates to provide planning and fundraising strategy services for the Family Resource Center. The consultant completed a feasibility study and is currently assisting the coordinator with developing the fundraising campaign.

*\*received one-time grant*

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Center for Child Care Resources: Since the program began in 1999, the number of identified child care slots in Boone County has increased by **284** slots, with **33** additional infant slots. The number of group training sessions offered in Boone County to providers increased from **4 to 32**. The increased number of group training options reflects coordination of the ChildNet training series and continuing collaborative training efforts between ISU Extension and Heartland AEA.

Healthy Futures: This year 163 screens of pregnant women in Boone County were assessed a risk. Only 15% were assessed "no risk", 58% were assessed as "low risk" and the remaining 27% were considered "moderate to high risk". The year-to-date total staff contacts from Healthy Futures, Home Health Care of Boone County Hospital, and HOMEWARD Nursing Service have made **361** home visits, completed **395.5** hours of direct contact and spent **139.75** hours on the phone with participants.

Building Blocks: During the school year 2000-2001, there were 18 children enrolled in Building Blocks Pre-school from 16 families. This number remained constant as no children moved or dropped out from the program. All of the children were four years of age as of September 15, 2000 and live in the Boone School District. Three children were prescribed eyeglasses as a result of a screen, and one child was provided speech intervention by the AEA. Six of the children live in single-parent homes and ten live in two-parent homes. Nine of the children participated in the "wrap-around" care provided by Empowerment and **New Horizons Child Care Center**.

Ogden Head Start: Last year the preschool started mid-year, enrolling 9 eligible students. A request for funds has been approved and is in the process of being awarded.

Family Resource Center Planning Services: The FRC will house an accredited infant and child care center with additional preschool services, Head Start classrooms, and Adult Day Services. The City of Boone will take ownership of the facility once it is built. With the Federal CDBG grant and continued support of the City and community, the project will be under construction as early as spring 2003.

## Together 4 Families

### **Counties in Area:**

Bremer, Butler, Franklin, and Grundy Counties

### **Contact for Area:**

Shawna Lebeck  
Community Coordinator  
Butler County D.H.S.  
315 N. Main – P.O. Box 306  
Allison, Iowa 50602  
Phone: 319-267-2594  
Fax: 319-267-9678  
E-mail: [slebeck@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:slebeck@dhs.state.ia.us)

### **Vision and Mission:**

The vision of the Bremer, Butler, Franklin and Grundy County Empowerment Area is to create communities that recognize the value of collaboration in regard to providing an environment for children that is safe, healthy, nurturing and intellectually stimulating. The vision is based on the beliefs that each child has a right to be safe, healthy, nurtured and educated; families/parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children's needs are met and rights fulfilled; all members of the community can and should play a role in promoting the overall well-being of families and children by being inclusive and providing opportunities for families to meet their basic needs; each family and community in the area has strengths that can be built upon.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

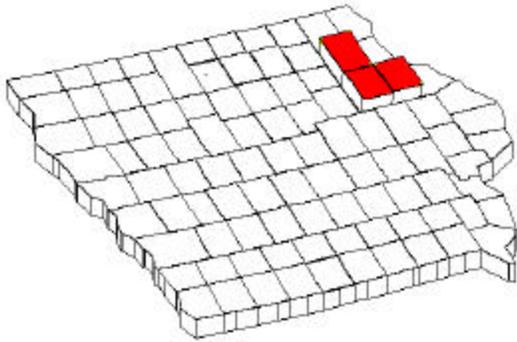
Together 4 Families hosted an annual and monthly planning meetings to identify priority issues for families with children and programs/services that were likely to result in positive outcomes for those families. (Identified FY 2002 priorities were as follows: ADD/ADHD, child care, coordination, domestic violence, early intervention & parent education, individual services, innovative programs, mentoring, school programming, and substance abuse.) The collaborative utilized funding from a variety of sources (Decategorization, Empowerment, Juvenile Justice, Promoting Safe & Stable Families) to implement/provide the needed services/programs. The funding sources identified the goals or desired results to be achieved with the funding. Together 4 Families then matched the programs/services that were identified as being needed with the most appropriate funding source.

### **Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Together 4 Families serves the entire four-county area, but each county and some of the communities also have their own "grass roots" level collaboratives. All of the collaboratives have broad-based community representation and are focused on meeting the needs of families with children. Open communication exists among all of the collaborative groups, which has made it possible to maximize the resources for families with children that are currently available in the area. The collaboratives have been successful in creating and implementing a variety of services/programs that have had a positive impact on families with children.

**Empowerment - Primary Services Provided & Local Indicators:**

| <b>Need – Program/Service</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Timeline</b> |
|--|--|-----------------|
| <b>Child Care: Resource Development Coordinator &amp; Mini Grants</b> (The full-time Resource Development Coordinator's role is to provide outreach and support to child care providers. The mini-grant program that the coordinator administers is intended to serve as an incentive for child care providers to become registered, while promoting infant care and age appropriate brain stimulation.) | 10% increase in the number of licensed/registered child care providers   | 3-5 Years       |
|  | 5% increase in the number of unregistered, referable child care providers listed with child care resource and referral           | 3-5 Years       |
|  | 5% increase in the number of licensed/registered/non-regulated providers participating in training                               | Annual          |
|  | 5% increase in the number of parents utilizing Child Care Resource and Referral's consultation service when selecting child care | 3-5 Years       |
| <b>Parent Education: Newsletters</b> (Parenting newsletters will be distributed to all parents of children ages 0-5. Parenting newsletters are a proven way to improve parenting skills, reduce child abuse, and strengthen early childhood development.)  | 200% increase in the number of newsletters distributed the first year and a 10 % increase annually thereafter                    | Annual          |
|  | 50% of parents utilizing the newsletters will report an increase in positive parent-child interaction                            | Annual          |
|  | 3% decrease in child abuse   | 3-5 Years       |
|  | 3% decrease in CINA  | 3-5 Years       |
| <b>Early Intervention: HOPES</b> (HOPES is a home visitor program for the parents of newborns that promotes healthy child development and parental nurturing skills.)  | 20% increase in parenting skills   | Annual          |
|  | 3% decrease in low birth weight  | 3-5 Years       |
|  | 3% decrease in child abuse   | 3-5 Years       |
|  | 3% increase in immunization  | 3-5 Years       |
| <b>School Readiness: PAT</b> (Parents As Teachers is a home visitor program that enhances children's language, intellectual, social, and motor skills.)  | 80% of parents who participate in the PAT program will increase their knowledge of infant/child development                      | Annual          |
|  | 80% of children who participate in the PAT Program until entering kindergarten will demonstrate age appropriate skills.          | 3-5 Years       |
| <b>School Readiness: Preschool Scholarships</b> (Children not eligible for Head Start and unable to pay for other pre-school fees would be eligible for tuition scholarships.)   | 100% of children who attend preschool will be school ready and successfully transition into kindergarten                         | Annual          |
|  | 10% increase in the number of children utilizing scholarships  | Annual          |



***Buchanan, Delaware and Fayette  
Community Empowerment Area  
Decategorization Project  
212 First Street East  
Independence, Iowa 50644  
(319) 334 - 5105  
Fax: (319) 334 – 5106  
E-mail: bdfcea@trxinc.com***

---

**Counties in the Area:**

Buchanan, Delaware and Fayette

**Contact for the Area:**

Jeanette Randall  
Project Coordinator  
Address, Fax and E-mail stated above  
Web Site: [bdfEmpowerment.org](http://bdfEmpowerment.org)

**Vision:**

***Families are at the heart of our communities. We envision families growing and prospering in communities that promote family self-esteem, self-sufficiency and self-determination.***

**Overview of the Community Plan:**

This Empowerment Area has had the good fortune of having strong and involved Board, Work Group and Advisory Board committee members who functioned for four months without a project coordinator. Representatives from area agencies, public health and schools, elected officials and citizens meet on a regular basis to determine how this Area can best serve the families and children ages 0 to 5.

Efforts in FY02 are many-fold and will continue to develop into FY03 that include:

1. a system of communication and collaboration, from within, that streamlines recommendations to the BDF Board creating an affective means for grassroots involvement.
2. a focus on evaluation procedures and accountability for providers and programs.
3. offering additional support for providers who have undergone extensive evaluations.
4. recognizing preschool and child care staff for their leadership and efforts in providing quality programs with limited financial resources.
5. informing other community entities and individuals about the vision of Empowerment and expanding the scope of its efforts.

The ultimate goal is to establish a service system that incorporates the strengths of each community to work together across program and geographical lines that will best serve the families and children in this Empowerment Area.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

| Provider  | Targeted Results                             | Indicators   | Programs  | Collaboration  | Results  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Palmer Hospital,<br>Peoples Hospital,<br>Regional Medical Center                                  | Healthy Children                             | Childhood Immunization   | Immunizations & follow-up   | Physicians sharing info w/ comm.. health to ensure info is sent to state   | 422 children received immunizations  |
| Kidsville, Husky Hub, Operation: New View Community Action, Child Care Resource and Referral, ISU | Children Ready to Succeed in School          | Number of children attending preschool not qualifying for Head Start<br><br>Staff training<br>Evaluation<br>Material support | Preschool Scholarships<br><br>Preschool Teacher Scholarships<br><br>Material/Equip<br>Mini-grants<br><br>Program Evaluation | Preschool staff working in cooperation with agencies to ensure opportunities for children in need/ Referrals to other agencies when needed/<br>Willingness to better program through eval<br>ACCESS/Area Education Agcy. | 72 24+<br><br>6 pre-schools received evaluation of program by ISU extension<br><br>Pre-school eval on school readiness                                     |
| Volunteer Coop, Inc<br>Parents Share & Support<br>Kindermusik                                     | Secure and Nurturing Families                | Families receiving in-home support<br><br>Mentoring for new mothers<br><br>Group Centered Parent Training                    | HOPES/MOM<br><br>Parents as Teachers<br><br>Kindermusik   | Referrals to & from Education Health/other agencies<br><br>Seat belt safety Programs with local bus. & hospital  | 176 families and 279 children served by HOPES & PAT in home based programs<br><br>140 families & 160 children received either full or partial Kind. School |
| Child Care Resource & Referral<br><br>Operation: New View Parent Share & Support Volunteer Coop   | Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments | Coordination & Recruitment<br>Mini-grants<br>Staff training/ Recognition<br><br>Crisis Child Care                            | CCR&R Coordinator For programs and minigrants<br><br>Op: New View, Parent Share & Support, Vol. Coop                        | Schools, libraries, AEA, Head Start, Elected officials<br><br>Law enforcemt; Medical ref./churches/ Other agencies   | Recruited 15 new providers;<br>Responded to 701 T.A. calls;<br>Rec. approx. 100 staff<br><br>Provided crisis care for Children – families                  |

## Buena Vista, Crawford & Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area:

Buena Vista County, Crawford County, Sac County

|   |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>School Districts</i> Storm Lake/St. Mary's | Denison               | Sac City              |
| Alta  | Schleswig             | Wall Lake View Auburn |
| Sioux Central                                 | ArWeVa                | Odebolt-Arthur        |
| Newell-Fonda/Fonda OLGC                       | Charter Oak-Ute       | Schaller-Crestland    |
| Albert City-Truesdale                         | Irwin-Kirkman-Manilla |                       |

### Contact for Area:

|                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Diane Briest                | Phone: 712-732-2257, Ext. 17 |
| 824 Flindt Drive, Suite 105 | Fax: 712-732-7654            |
| Storm Lake, IA 50588        | Email: dbriest@rconnect.com  |

### Vision:

It is the vision of the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area that families, schools, communities, and providers share in the responsibility for ensuring the social, emotional, and behavioral success of all children. Children are able to live in safe and nurturing families, in supportive communities, and able to succeed in school, preparing them to be responsible adults, parents, and citizens.

### Mission:

To energize communities, families, and individuals and enable them to take responsibility for their future.

### Overview of Community Plan:

Collaborative guidance for our Community Empowerment Area is provided by four boards comprised of a wide variety of citizens, public and private school administrators and personnel, Area Education Agencies, Community Action Agencies and Head Start Programs, Departments of Public Health, law enforcement, mental health providers, substance abuse treatment providers, Child Care Resource & Referral, Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services, and other local providers of services to the families and children of our area. With a structure comprised of action teams in our local communities and three individual county Advisory Boards, all overseen by a three-county Community Empowerment Board, the unique needs of our entire area are addressed both individually and collectively. This structure has provided increased communication and cooperation not only for our direct Empowerment activities, but for additional collaborations between participating community partners.

### Local Indicators:

| Linking Local Activities to State Indicators       |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| State Desired Results                              | Local Program                              | Local Desired Results  | Local Indicators  |
| <b>Healthy Children</b>                            | Family STEPS                               | <i>The health, safety, and development of children will improve with access to pre-natal services that are available to all families.</i>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of babies born who weigh under 5 lbs 5 oz</li> <li>▪ Rate of children immunized at a public clinic by age 2</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Safe and Nurturing Families</i>                 | Early Childhood Mini-Grants                | <i>Children will live in families that are safe, secure and nurturing, with families having access to parent education and support programs.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children ages 0-18 whose abuse has been founded by DHS</li> <li>▪ Birth rate for females aged 17 and younger</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Safe and Supportive Communities</i>             | Preschool and Child Care Expansion Project | <i>Families will live in communities that are safe and supportive of children and families.</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total arrests of children 18 years and under for any offense</li> <li>▪ % of Iowans age 18 and under whose income is at or below the federal poverty level</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Children Ready To Succeed In School</i>         | Baby Boutique                              | <i>Children will enter school ready to learn.</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % Preschools receiving mini-grants that are accredited or working towards accreditation</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Secure and Nurturing Childcare Environments</i> |  | <i>Children will have access to safe and nurturing child care environments within the communities of their choice.</i>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # “slots” or “spaces” potentially available for a child in a registered setting</li> <li>▪ % child care settings receiving mini-grants that have expanded capacity with mini-grants</li> <li>▪ % child care settings receiving mini-grants that have or receive training in Early Brain research strategies</li> </ul> |

## **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

### **Family STEPS: Support To Experience Parenting Success**



Family STEPS is our in-home visitation and family support program. Following family-centered practices and principles, Family STEPS offers home visits, support and education for all families expecting a child or with a child ages 0-5, to help provide a healthy start in life. Family STEPS can assist families through prenatal support, quality child care, parenting skills and confidence-building, linkage to a medical home, and referrals to community resources. Family STEPS uses nationally known, research based curriculums to share appropriate information with families. This year Family STEPS added teen moms support groups in an effort to better reach the teens in our communities. This has been very successful in making Family STEPS approachable for these young parents. Family STEPS is a collaborative effort of Buena Vista County Public Health, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, Crawford County Home Health/Hospice/Public Health, Lutheran Social Service of Iowa, and Sac County Health Services. Family STEPS is supported by the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area School Ready Funds. In FY 02, Family STEPS served 234 families, an increase of 117% from FY 01.

### **Early Childhood (TANF) Mini-Grants**

Twenty-eight Early Childhood Mini-grants provided local communities with financial assistance to address the unique needs for the early childhood environments within their communities. Early Childhood Mini-grants have addressed multiple needs, including health and safety needs, preschool scholarships, expansion of capacity, increased preschool slots, transportation assistance, developmental materials and supplies, recruitment and retention of providers, and child development staff training. Mini-grants are supported by the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area Early Childhood Funds.

### **Preschool and Childcare Expansion Project**

Five projects received assistance through a one-time expansion project. This assistance provided for 104 children to attend preschool, additional instruction assistants to enhance the preschool experience, and assisted in the development of 90 licensed day care slots. Expansion projects were funded with School Ready Funds.

### ***Baby Boutique***

Two Baby Boutique projects have been initiated in our area. Modeled after the March of Dimes Stork's Nest, the Baby Boutiques offer participants expecting a baby or with a child up to age two an opportunity to earn points through activities such as appropriate medical care, Family STEPS visits, attending education classes, and keeping their child's immunizations up to date. Earned points can be redeemed for baby/child necessities such as diapers, car seats, developmental toys, etc. Baby Boutiques all offer monthly classes on breastfeeding support and a monthly class on topic of interest such as discipline. Multiple community partners are assisting in providing the planning, staffing, child care, and guest speaking roles.

# Linking Families and Communities



## Counties in Area

Calhoun, Pocahontas and Webster Counties

## Contact for Area:

Elizabeth Stanek  
515 Court Street, Box 71  
Rockwell City, IA 50579  
Phone: 712-297-8524 ext.225 Fax: 712-297-5309  
E-mail: [estanek@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:estanek@dhs.state.ia.us)  
Web site: [www.linking-families.com](http://www.linking-families.com)

## Vision and Mission:

**Vision.** LINKING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES will engage communities and families collaboratively in building a system and environment in which families and communities are strengthened and empowered through choices and opportunities. Our vision capitalizes on strengths and leads to healthy and resilient families and children.

**Mission.** The mission of LINKING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES is to improve the well being of children and families through collaboration, creation and implementation of a client-driven service system. Implementation of a client-driven service system will focus on reducing barriers to families and reduction in duplication of services.

## Overview of Community Plan:

Linking Families and Communities is located in the Northwest region of the state and is comprised of Calhoun, Pocahontas and Webster counties. Through Empowerment, agencies collaborate to maximize resources and programs to better serve children and families age 0-5.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Linking Families and Communities provides funding for four main programs:

### Child Care Consultants

The Child Care Consultants work with child care home providers and centers to improve the quality of care, ensure compliance, promote and recruit licensed child care providers. Child care providers receive incentives, training and support from the Child Care Consultants.

- Number of registered/licensed child care that provide non-traditional hour child care
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed child care that provide non-traditional hour child care
- Number of register/licensed child care providers
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed providers
- Number of registered/licensed child care providers that provide at least two of the following: nontraditional child care, sick child care, infant care, and special needs child care
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed providers that provide at least two of the following: nontraditional child care, sick child care, infant care, and special needs child care.

### Child Care Health Consultants

The Child Care Health Consultants work with child care providers and centers to improve health and safety concerns and encourage registration among non-registered providers. Child care providers receive health and safety training from the Child Care Health Consultants.

- Number of registered child care providers in compliance with the "Checklist for Day Care Home Registration".
- Number of non-registered child care providers in compliance with the "Checklist for Day Care Home Registration".

### **Preschool Opportunities Expansion Program**

Tuition scholarships and transportation reimbursement is available to families with a 3 – 5 year old in each of the counties. The parents can apply for these programs at the preschool of their choice and may qualify for a \$50 scholarship (most scholarships are \$20 -\$30) and transportation reimbursement. This program enables families to give their children a preschool experience and ensure that they are school ready.

Preschools can apply for a \$1,500 mini-grant to improve the quality of their preschool through projects that develop or improve opportunities for school readiness. Preschools must complete an application and submit a project proposal.

- Percentage of capacity used in Headstart classrooms
- Percentage/Number enrolled in Private Preschools
- Percentage of the transportation and tuition scholarships utilized for children to attend preschool
- Number of preschools that submit an application to develop or improve opportunities for school readiness

### **Every Child Reads**

Training for child care providers and preschool teachers to promote literacy. The participants were required to attend 15 hours of training that covered three modules: Language, Reading and Writing. Peer practice, homework and follow-up modules were also required to reinforce the principles taught in the training.

### **Family Foundations**

Family Foundations offers pregnant women and all new parents appropriate supportive services and to offer those at risk families an intensive home visitation service. The level of appropriate supportive services is identified from a universal risk screening of all families with newborns and/or prenatal women. The program then assists families in designing an Individual Family Support Plan based on strengths and goals and works with families over an extended period to achieve these goals.

- Percentage of children in Family Foundations showing delayed physical development will be linked and access community resources
- Percentage of children in Family Foundations (FF) showing delayed cognitive development will be linked and access community resources
- Percentage of children in Family Foundations will be fully immunized by age two
- Percentage of families in FF will access a medical home
- Rate per 1,000 for children ages 0-17 of confirmed child abuse/neglect reports
- Percentage of families in FF will participate in an age and developmentally appropriate curriculum for children
- Percentage of families in FF will improve home safety
- Percentage of families in FF will receive information on family planning
- Percentage of families in FF will verbalize increased information on choosing child care

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes :**

Linking Families and Communities has worked together with area agencies to ensure that children and families receive needed services. This community approach has been extremely helpful to families and to the agencies that serve them by promoting a caring attitude, increasing referrals for all agencies and putting the emphasis on the people, which often gets lost in a time of decreased funding. We collaborate with many agencies to meet the needs of families. We have been able to offer the Every Child Reads training to more child care providers and preschools, than the Every Child Reads grant would have allowed due to Empowerment funding and the generosity of area schools, colleges and agencies.



**Boost4Families Contact Information:**  
Sonja M. Marquez, Coordinator  
PO Box 469  
Glenwood, IA 51534  
712-527-1578 (phone)/3941 (fax)  
[smarque@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:smarque@dhs.state.ia.us)

### **Vision and Mission:**

The vision of Cass/Mills/Montgomery Boost4Families is to support quality services that are integrated, comprehensive, and family centered, resulting in nurtured, resilient, healthy, and responsible individuals.

### **MOTTO**

**Strong Families**  **Iowa's Future**

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

Cass, Mills, and Montgomery counties were designated an Empowerment Area in January 1999. The three counties include a population of approximately 41,002, with 2,413 children ages 0-5. Prior to January 1999, the three counties worked together as a child welfare Decategorized area, and as an Innovation Zone. Decat and Empowerment are completely integrated in this area, sharing governance structures, personnel, and other resources. In May 1999, the area was designated by the National Partnership for Re-Inventing Government as a "Boost4Kids" site, further strengthening the focus on achieving positive results for children.

Although the focus of Empowerment activity has been on services to 0-5 year old children and their families, Boost4Families also maintains an active involvement in services for older children, including projects related to school attendance, after-school activities, youth support groups, substance abuse prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, etc. Due to budget cuts, Boost4Families could not continue funding services for children over the age of 5 during FY03.

### **EMPOWERMENT GOALS**

The following are Boost4Families Empowerment goals:

- Ensure access to preschool services for at-risk children ages 3-5;
- Ensure a comprehensive program for child development education for parents of children ages 0-5; and
- Increase the availability and quality of child care.

### **Local Indicators:**

The following indicators will measure the success of Empowerment activities achieving Boost4Families' goals:

1. Measurement of skill level/readiness of children entering kindergarten
2. Percentage of kindergarten students who have attended preschool
3. Number of available preschool spaces
4. Teen birth rate and percentage of births to mothers age 20 or older
5. Low birth weight rate
6. Immunization rate at age 2
7. Child abuse rate
8. Percentage of parents accessing parenting/community resources before leaving the hospital after the birth of a child
9. Number of licensed/registered child care slots
10. Number of center-based infant care, sick child care, and night care slots

## **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

### **Parent Education Programs**

During FY02, three **Parents As Teachers** programs (one in each county) served **471 children, 334 families and made 3,566 home visits**. **Building Families** in Cass County met with **67 families** during the year, with **88 children** served during the fourth quarter. The **Building Families** New Mom visitation program in Cass County received **144 referrals** for the year. **Parenting** classes were offered by I Care About Kids, Inc. in two counties during FY02, with **60 parents** completing the course.

### **Crisis Child Care**

In FY02, I Care About Kids, Inc. provided Crisis Child Care to Mills and Montgomery counties. During that year, Mills County had **92 days** of service with **950 hours** of child care. Montgomery County had **287 days** of service with **3,413 hours** of child care. Family Crisis Support Network continues to operate the Crisis Nursery in Cass County, which is not funded by Boost4Families. I Care About Kids, Inc. took over crisis child care services in Mills and Montgomery counties in July 2001 with **Parent's Time Off**. At the end of June 2002, Montgomery County had served 44 children and Mills County had served 26 children.

### **Families Growing & Knowing**

Results from the distribution of the **Families Growing and Knowing Bags** have been compiled. In FY02, **1,245** bags were distributed in the three counties. To better serve the Hispanic population in Montgomery County, 20 Spanish bags from each of five age levels were created and distributed in Red Oak.

### **Child Care Development Specialist**

A **Child Care Development Specialist** provides child development information to child care providers both in homes and centers in an effort to promote quality child care. The specialist also performs ITERS/ECERS quality child care measurements in provider homes in the three counties. The specialist has **evaluated 24** homes and centers in the three counties.

### **Extended Day And Weekend Care Grant**

To increase the availability of evening and weekend child care, grants provide an increase in the hourly wage for home/center providers who care for children ages 0-5 after 6 p.m. during the week or anytime on the weekend. Ten grants were approved during FY02 across the three counties and **29 children** received extended day or weekend care services during that same time.

### **Infant Equipment Grant**

Grants are available to assist licensed/registered child care providers and centers in the expansion of child care services for infants (birth-2) offered in the three counties. Grants allow for the purchase of infant furniture and toys. In FY02, **15 infant equipment grants** were approved. An enhancement of this grant started in January 2001 includes children ages 3-5 and includes consumables such as art/craft supplies. In FY02, **21 enhancement grants** were approved. Both grants allow up to \$500 for home providers and \$2,000 for centers.

### **Preschool Tuition Grants**

The 11 school districts in Cass, Mills and Montgomery counties have approved **103 Tuition Grants** for preschool children the 2001-02 school year. Tuition grants of up to \$50 per month were available to parents.

### **Transportation Of Preschool Children**

Boost4Families has contracted with local taxi-cab and community trolley companies, and is working with preschools as well as school districts to provide transportation for students to and from preschool. During the 2001-02 school year, **13 youth** were served.

### **Preschool Staff Development Grants**

Cass/Mills/Montgomery Boost4Families offers a \$500 staff development grant to area preschool staff to support continuing education. Applications are accepted three times per year.

### **Two At-Risk Preschools**

Glenwood and Nishna Valley Schools each opened at-risk preschool classrooms in the fall of 1999 with Empowerment funding. For the 2001-02 school year, Nishna Valley has **24 preschool** students enrolled, while **Glenwood has 18** using preschool services. Also in FY02, Boost4Families assisted in funding the Fremont - Mills Preschool and the Red Oak Right Start Preschool.

### **Selection Of Kindergarten Readiness Measurement Tool**

The **10 school districts** continue to use a common tool to measure the "school readiness" of each year's entering kindergarten class. The 1999 tool provided the baseline. Each fall, kindergarten teachers evaluate the readiness of each student, with measurable results shown in many areas.



**CEDAR COUNTY EMPOWERMENT  
P.O. BOX 23, TIPTON, IA 52772**

**Contact for Area**

Rick Fleshin Cedar County Public Health, Tipton, IA 52772, 563-886-2226 [rfleshin@cedarcounty.org](mailto:rfleshin@cedarcounty.org)

**Vision and Mission:**

- Preserve the family as the central system of support for all children.
- Empower families to protect and support all children, while maintaining their rights, safety, and dignity.
- Improve cooperation among the public, private, and consumer entities within the community to enhance collaboration among the health, education, and family welfare systems.

***Our vision is based on the principals of:***

- The community represents all individuals working or living within Cedar County.
- The family is the basic unit of support for children, therefore, the basic unit of the community.
- Parents are primarily responsible for meeting the needs of their children. The community supports the parent's efforts to meet these needs.
- To the extent that it is possible, services should be accessible to the family within the community.
- The community can best meet the needs of families and children when health, education, and welfare services collaborate.
- The families and children who receive community services should be given greater opportunities to become participants in community planning.
- The health, education, and welfare systems can best meet needs when they have the flexibility and autonomy to respond to the unique characteristics of the community

**Overview of Community Plan:**

Cedar County Empowerment Area Board will provide leadership and support needed to implement a comprehensive effort to assess, plan, and deliver services to improve the lives of young children. The board will work with existing and new community resources to serve young children and their families. Our goal will be to improve the child's physical and mental health, to provide a better environment for learning and growth, and to increase/improve parenting skills.

The foremost goal of our empowerment area will be to increase the physical and mental health of our children 0 to 5, by aiding in development of services for the child, the parents and the caregivers. Our focus will be to support and fund programs that will meet the needs we have prioritized; but to also be open to new and innovative projects.

## Local Indicators:

The core indicators used to gauge the success of activities outlined were selected through a consensus of the Cedar County Empowerment Area Working Committee. The Working Committee has agreed that increased services could be by either expansion through current providers or new provider services or a combination of both.

| Local Indicators (From Above)                                  | Baseline Data (Include date and actual data) | Sub-sequent Years Data (Trend Line) |      |      | Goal/Comments  | Progress Update (Analysis)  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|------|------|--|---|
|  |  | FY99                                | FY00 | FY01 |  |   |
| # of Registered child care slots                               | 123  | 119                                 | 130  | 137  | Increase # slots by 10 by 6/30/2002  |   |
| # Licensed Child Care Slots                                    | Not Available                                | Unk                                 | Unk  | 503  | Increase # slots by 10 by 6/30/2002  |   |
| # of Accredited Child Care and Preschool                       | 0  | 0                                   | 0    | 0    | Increase number of accredited child care and preschools  |   |
| # of Families participating in Home visitation Programs        | 4  | 10                                  | 18   | 28   | Increase participation to 100%   |   |
| % of Children entering school demonstrating literacy skills    | Not available                                |                                     |      |      | Data is to start being collected by class of 2002 survey of Kindergarten teachers  |   |
| #/% Children Entering School with Quality Preschool Experience | Not Available                                |                                     |      |      | Data is to start being collected by class of 2002 survey of Kindergarten teachers  | Public Health to Begin inspection Of preschools for Health and safety. ISU extension Office to begin Evaluation also. |
| # of Preschool Slots   |  |                                     |      |      | One additional preschool program opened serving additional 5 children. Continues to be a challenge to assure an accurate and unduplicated indicator. |   |
| # women accessing pre-natal care/home visits                   |  |                                     |      | 4    | Public Health started a Prenatal Education program with formal classes.  |   |
| #/% of families networking/served                              |  |                                     |      | 155  |  |   |

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

### *Early Childhood Programs*

- Expand comprehensive quality child care capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment
- Enhance supportive/referral service provider communication with each other and with families through formal and informal networks
- To provide assistance in accessing HAWK-I or Title 19 Medicaid benefits to all families with eligible children
- Enhance transportation accessibility within the county.

### *School Ready Programs*

- Expand comprehensive early childhood education services in the county
- Enhance parent education through expanded home visitation and parent support programs—recognizing parents as first teachers

# CERRO GORDO, HANCOCK AND WORTH COUNTIES EMPOWERMENT AREA

## Contact for Area:

Becky Bernemann, Empowerment Service Coordinator  
Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health  
22 N. Georgia Avenue, Suite 300  
Mason City, IA 50401  
(641) 421-9329 Fax: (641) 421-9350  
e-mail: [triemp@cghealth.com](mailto:triemp@cghealth.com)  
Some information available at [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com)

## Vision and Mission:

To improve the lives of young children and their families in our community.

## Overview of Community Plan:

- ★ Empower new and expectant parents through a parent support/education/home visitation program.
- ★ Improve accessible and quality child care and preschool for all families with young children.
- ★ Enrich the network of community health services to guarantee children a healthy start.

## Local Indicators:

The following are the top priority indicators (in random order):

- Children enrolled in preschool
- Number of families participating in home visitation programs
- Infants born with low birth weight
- Children immunized by age 2 and school entry
- Number of mothers receiving prenatal care
- Number of children tested for blood lead levels
- Number of founded child abuse cases
- Infants born affected by drugs
- Number of founded family/domestic violence cases
- Kindergarten readiness
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level
- Training opportunities for childcare providers (number of providers trained, number of registered/licensed providers)

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Childcare Scholarship Program  
Developing Your Family Childcare Business  
Family Connections Home Visitation Program  
Head Start/Project Child Care Enrollment  
Clear Lake Early Childhood Program  
Northwood-Kensett Early Childhood Program  
Preschool Scholarship Program  
ABCD Project  
Parents As Teachers  
Sexual Abuse Treatment for Children and Parents  
Web-Based Immunization Registry

Childcare Scholarship Program offers assistance to families with a gross annual income between 140 and 185% of poverty guidelines. Scholarships up to \$2500 for a family with one child under the age of 6 and up to \$3500 for a family with more than one child under the age of 6. Families are responsible for 35% of their childcare payment.

Developing Your Family Childcare Business provides research based child development and business skill training to increase the number of high quality, registered in-home daycare providers within the tri-county empowerment area.

Family Connections Home Visitation Program educates the family during pregnancy or families with children ages 0-5. Families design their own plan through the use of an “Individual Family Service Plan” tool and are assigned a Family Support Worker that matches their desired outcomes. This support worker visits the home on a regular basis that caters to the needs of the family.

Head Start/Project Child Care Enrollment provides Head Start children with full year, full day services in a comprehensive developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum/center.

Clear Lake and Northwood-Kensett Early Childhood Programs provide weekly parent/child classes that support children’s development during the early years of life and offer parents positive parenting knowledge and skills and build awareness of available community resources.

Preschool Scholarship Program offers assistance to families with a gross annual income below 185% of poverty guidelines. Scholarships will provide up to \$60 per month to cover preschool costs for children under the age of 6. Families are responsible for any monthly preschool cost that exceeds \$60 per month.

ABCD Project (Achievement is Best with Creative Drama) develops and implements a custom-designed creative drama curriculum for area preschool teachers through instructional classes for preschool teachers and by conducting classes at area preschools.

Parents As Teachers provides parents with personal visits, parent meetings, screenings and linkages to a community resource network to help families lay a strong foundation for their child’s development.

Parents United (Sexual Abuse Treatment for Children and Parents) provides weekly group treatment for sexually abused children under the age of five and one non-offending parent.

Web-Based Immunization Registry provides a local immunization registry to assist public and private providers in tracking immunizations given and to improve the percentage of children who are appropriately immunized.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Current empowerment efforts have brought together service providers from a variety of organizations that historically have not worked together or been knowledgeable of services available. Current empowerment programs have made efforts to enhance services rather than duplicate programming or increase competition for services. An example of this is coordination of resources is the North Central Iowa United Way’s Success by Six initiative and the home visitation program “Family Connections”. The programs “Developing Your Family Childcare Business” and the “Clear Lake and Northwood-Kensett Early Childhood Programs” collaborated with other agencies in the area for presentations and for educational purposes. Empowerment Board members also serve on a variety of task forces, planning boards and advisory committees and bring a wealth of information, as well as, serve as an information dissemination method to our community.

# Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment

## Counties in Area:

Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth and Sioux

## Contact for Area:

Nola Aalberts, Coordinator  
215 Central SE, Box 395  
Orange City, IA  
Phone: 712-737-2943  
Fax: 712-737-3564  
email: [naalber@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:naalber@dhs.state.ia.us)  
website: [northwestiowa.org](http://northwestiowa.org)

## Vision and Mission:

Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment is committed to strengthening Community through loving, nurturing and responsible families, thereby providing security and success for children.

Parents of young children will have access to a seamless range of quality community services to assist them with the care and personal development of their children. Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment will work collaboratively with citizens, elected officials and community service providers to develop a system that addresses local and state mandated priorities relating to the positive physical and emotional development of area children.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment Board believe that as a result of our efforts: all families living within the Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment Area will have access to quality health, education and child care services, and will live in an environment that is conducive to reaching maximized growth potential. We believe that the first years of life are crucial in the development of young children, that the task of caring for these children is extremely important, and that the manner in which services are rendered will make a dramatic difference in the rest of a child's life. It is the belief of this empowerment area that programming designed and implemented as a result of community partnering will markedly improve the lives of children and families and will eliminate barriers to necessary services.

There is empirical data from brain research that proves that early intervention services are crucial to improving the lives of children. Quality prenatal care and a positive nurturing environment have been proven to have a profound positive impact. The reverse is also true. Negative experience or the lack of a nurturing, caring environment have been proven to have a negative impact on children's lives that can have serious and life long negative effects.

Based on the above the two areas on which the community plan focuses are: 1. the promotion of and technical assistance for the provision of quality day care services in the four county area. 2. prevention home visitation programs that target expectant mothers and newborns in promoting a positive nurturing environment for infants and toddlers.

**Local Indicators:**

1. Number of individuals/parents indicating an increase in knowledge regarding early childhood development.
2. Reduction in child abuse cases reported by welfare and justice providers
3. The number of individuals who apply for HAWK-I insurance program.
4. Reduction in number of children in foster care.
5. Number of Child Care Providers who have participated in professional development activities
6. On-site consultations for child care providers
7. Percentage of parents who increase their knowledge of child development

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The services that are being provided are:

1. *Benefits for Beginners* which is a program designed as a response to the critical need for quality child care in our four county area. The mission of the program is to help child care providers, parents, and early childhood workers understand children's developmental stages and needs and to help caregivers improve their interaction techniques.
2. *Healthy Families Northwest Iowa* is a program which supports families of newborns. The goals of the Healthy Families program are to strengthen families and provide safe, nurturing environments in which children thrive.
3. *Child Care Grants* were awarded to 15 Child Care Programs in the four counties. The grants are to enable an increase in both quality and quantity.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

There continues to be increased collaboration and cooperation between the health, education and social service providers in the Empowerment area. Many are represented on the Board and have provided in-put and direction into the services provided. The Board Sub-Committees and Task Forces are made up of individuals from the four counties and from the various categories and disciplines represented on the Board. NICE is enrolled as a Medicaid provider in the Infant and Toddler program, thus works very closely with Early Access. In one county the Family Support Worker is also providing Service Coordination for a high probability family enrolled in both programs.

The recipients of service also serve as a focal point for coordination and collaboration. two examples in the Healthy Families Program 1. A family referred by Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD. The couple had recently delivered twins prematurely. They are doing well and growth development is appropriate for their adjusted age. The Family Support Worker (FSW) referred the family to WIC for assistance with formula and to Early Access (AEA) for assessment of development. They will also visit the Child Health Specialty Clinic to have periodic developmental check ups. Mom and dad are both employed. The paternal and maternal grandmothers provide day care. The couple is in the process of purchasing their first home. The family is open and receptive to the teaching and activities of the Healthy Families Program. 2. A family enrolled in the program since prenatal stage. The infant is now eight months old and through out the course of weekly visits, pre-denver screenings, weight and height measurements, a significant developmental delays were noted in the areas of speech, fine/gross motor delays and weak muscle development. The family agreed to a referral to Early Access and Child Health Specialty Clinic. Through combined efforts the infant has begun to show increased improvement with speech development and fine/gross motor skills. Muscle exercises are being used to increase muscle development. A referral has also been made to Physical Therapy. The family has stated that they would have had no idea there were delays without the Healthy Families program assistance

## **FMC Community Empowerment (Floyd-Mitchell-Chickasaw)**

### **Counties in Area:**

Chickasaw, Floyd, Mitchell

### **Contact for Area:**

Laurie Edson, FMC Facilitator  
P.O. Box 3  
Nashua, IA 50658  
Phone/fax: 641-435-4435  
Email: [fmc@rconnect.com](mailto:fmc@rconnect.com)  
Website: [fmccom.org](http://fmccom.org)

### **Vision and Mission:**

The Floyd, Mitchell, and Chickasaw (FMC) Community Empowerment area envisions that children, prenatal to school age, will live in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment in order to become successful and contributing members of our community. Families will be strengthened and empowered through support services leading to their self-sufficiency.

#### **The FMC Community Empowerment Area's mission:**

- Each child has a right to be safe, healthy, nurtured, and educated.
- Families are the primary care givers and educators of their children
- Working collaboratively results in eliminating barriers, meeting identified objectives, and utilizing resources more effectively.
- Programs and services will have a strong component of outcomes-based measurement for families and children that is realistic with success indicators that show direction.
- The community and families will be strengthened by the creation of new and the fostering of existing community-based partnerships between citizens, education, government, health, social services and any other individuals committed to the vision.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

The Community Plan of the FMC Community Empowerment Area will be to prepare children to be ready for school and to enhance early childhood services. The FMC Community Empowerment Area has:

- Offered parent education and support for Parents as Teachers Program and “Families Together”, following nurturing program similar to HOPES.
- Offered 225 preschool scholarships to children in three counties this past fiscal year
- Increased Head Start slots, expanded the school day and school year. Also funds helped open an additional Head Start classroom in an outlying community with collaboration from the local school.
- Implemented early literacy programs for parents and children through 15 local libraries in 3 counties, WIC, and Head Start, and daycares in 3 counties.
- Provided outreach, training and support for quality child care providers in three counties. In fiscal year 2002, contacted 54 potential new providers—of those, 28 became registered providers.
- Public Health in 3 counties: helped provide Hepatitis B shots for daycare providers, childhood immunizations, well-baby checks, prenatal checks, child car safety seat checks, head lice checks, lactation specialist checks for new moms.

- Implemented a series of four FMC Empowerment board retreats, facilitated by University of Northern Iowa's Institute for Decision Making (IDM).
- Initiated on-going public forums for three counties in FMC area to solicit public input on programs and identify gaps in services.

**Local Indicators:**

- Parent Education and Support:
  - 2 Decrease in out-of-home placements
  - 2 Decrease in confirmed child abuse and neglect cases
  - 2 Decrease in juvenile delinquency
  - 2 Increase in parental involvement of programs available (Osage: GT) Education opportunities for parents (parenting skills, health)
- Maternal and Child Health:
  - 2 Increase in number of children with lead levels less than 10 mcq/dl
  - 2 Increase in prenatal care during the first trimester
  - 2 Decrease in low birth weight
  - 2 Increase in post-natal and well-baby checks
- Quality and Accessible Childcare:
  - 2 Increase in number of trained, licensed/registered childcare providers
  - 2 Increase in number of available trainings for childcare providers
  - 2 Increase in number slots available at licensed/registered childcare providers
- Early Childhood Education:
  - 2 Increase in parents' opportunities to explore educational and family development activities.
  - 2 Increase utilization of book bags for daycares and preschools.
  - 2 Increase enrollment in Head Start sites and preschools.
  - 2 Expanded slots in Head Start.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

- Preschool scholarships offered to children in three counties.
- Head Start services in 3 counties continue to expand into other communities due to additional slots.
- Families Together/Parents as Teachers Programs serve increased number of families in three counties.
- Public Health continues prenatal and postpartum checks, car safety seat inspection, and lactation specialist; also head lice checks/treatments and lead screening, immunizations.
- EAGLE (early literacy program) offered to children ages 0-5 in three counties through WIC Clinics, and daycares.
- Minigrants to daycare providers in three counties.
- Daycare scholarship monies given to providers to assist families in three counties.
- Childcare provider trainings and support offered through Childcare Resource and Referral. This position was funded through FMC Empowerment money.
- "Back to school special" minigrant offered to daycare providers.
- "Preschool Perks" grant provided monetary assistance for special programming or other needs as identified by preschools in the three counties. These monies helped fill gaps unique to rural areas.



## Family First Empowerment Area

### Clarke County including school districts of Clarke and Murray

#### Contact for Area:

Mary Jo Schade • 134 W. Jefferson • Osceola, IA 50213  
 Telephone: 641-342-9312 • email: schademj@pionet.net

#### Vision and Mission Statement:

To collectively proceed with old business in a new way through collaboration, mutual support, and diminished duplication and therefore, enhance the quality of life for all Clarke County residents. Family First Empowerment Area (FFEA) is dedicated to the mission of building healthy children, healthy families and a healthy community. Family First believes that: every child has a right to reach his or her potential in school and in life; every child has a right to all services appropriate to meet the needs of that child; every family has a right to be a partner in this process; every family has a right to a productive and healthy life; the entire community has a responsibility to support families.

Family First believes that all families have access to adequate and appropriate services that support and promote healthy productive lives and: **improve** the well-being of families with young children, **reduce** unnecessary barriers to community efforts, **encourage** early intellectual stimulation of very young children, **increase** the basic readiness levels of students entering school, **increase** the health status of children, **reduce** the incidence of child abuse and neglect, **increase** the access of children to an adult mentor, **increase** parental involvement with their children, **increase** the quality and accessibility of child care, **improve** the efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health and human service programs.

#### Overview of Community Plan:

Our initial grant identified the following gaps in services for children birth through 5 years and their families;

- no consistent database of newborns in Clarke County,
- no central location of information for families with young children,
- special needs of our increasing Hispanic population,
- lack of home visiting programs for new parents,
- and lack of resources for parents relating to child development.

Since the hiring of the Early Childhood Resource Specialist to begin addressing the identified gaps, we are now striving to;

- re-visit earlier identified gaps,
- maintain and improve existing programs and initiate new services,
- and increase public awareness of our programs and provide leadership in early childhood education.

#### Local Indicators – Early Childhood/School Ready:

| Need  | Local Indicators   | State Indicators  |
|---|--|---|
| Increase capacity and quality of child care in Clarke County  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase in number of registered child care providers/slots</li> <li>➢ Increase in number of licensed child care providers</li> <li>➢ Increase in number of accredited and child care and preschool programs</li> <li>➢ Increase in number of registered and licensed child care providers participating in training requirements</li> <li>➢ Increase in number of sick child care slots or increase in these types of providers (sick care and non-traditional hours)</li> </ul> | Healthy Children (Birth to 5)<br>Children Ready to Succeed in School<br>Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments  |
| Increase satisfaction with early childhood services in Clarke County including the increase of parent education of young children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Parents as Teachers participation/parent survey</li> <li>➢ Child care provider satisfaction survey</li> <li>➢ Parent evaluation of Early Head Start</li> <li>➢ Begingergarten Bag Survey/Teacher Satisfaction</li> </ul>  | <b>Healthy Children (Birth to 5)</b><br>Children Ready to Succeed in School<br>Secure and Nurturing Families<br>Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environment |
| Increase early literacy in Clarke County  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase distribution of New Baby Bags (books)</li> <li>➢ Increase awareness of Diversity Bags to be checked out by home providers/centers</li> </ul>   | Children Ready to Succeed in School<br>Secure and Nurturing Families<br>Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments  |
| Increase access to quality preschool experience   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase in number of children entering school who have had a preschool experience</li> </ul>   | Children Ready to Succeed in School   |
| Increase awareness of parents with newborns of community resources  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase in percentages of identified newborns</li> </ul>   | Healthy Children (Birth to 5)<br>Safe and Supportive Communities<br>Secure and Nurturing Families   |

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

FY 2001 was the first year of School Ready Funding for the Family First Empowerment Area. Services provided with this funding included:

- Early Childhood Resource Specialist
- Parents as Teachers Program
- Begingergarten Bags for all students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2002 at the Clarke and Murray Schools
- New Baby Bags for all identified newborns in Clarke County
- Murray Community Preschool Program in collaboration with Shared Visions
- Preschool Scholarships to area preschools
- Transportation for preschool students to and from centers
- Mini-grants for area preschools/centers

In our second year of Early Childhood Funding for the Family First Empowerment area we provided the following services:

- Child Care Consultant providing assistance to child care providers in becoming registered
- Assist Child Care Resource and Referral and Child Care Food Program with required trainings/workshops including Child Net Certification
- Mini-grants to child care providers
- Assembling diversity bags for check out by home child care providers and centers
- Child Care Conference - “Keys to Unlocking the Minds of Children”

**Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

We believe our services support our Vision and Mission statement. The Family First Empowerment Area is dedicated to the mission of building healthy children, healthy families and a healthy community.

**\*\*\*\*\*Parents as Teachers\*\*\*\*\***

Our efforts to provide home visits through our Parents as Teachers program has proven to be very successful. Using the Born to Learn Curriculum, Clarke County Parents as Teachers offers age appropriate developmental activities that encourage language development, intellectual growth, social development and motor skills. Our enrollment has grown from five families (seven children) to twenty-eight families (39) children in the last year. Through collaboration with Early Access, WIC Clinic, and the Maternal Child Health Nurse at Public Health, we have established a rapport and trust with parents in our community.

**\*\*\*\*\*Beginnergarten Bags\*\*\*\*\***

Keeping our focus on school readiness activities, Beginnergarten Bags were assembled and given to children and their parents during Kindergarten Roundup so that they have the summer to use the materials. Our Community Partners included the staff at the ISU Extension office with the assistance of the 4-H Youth Council. The evaluation by one administrator stated, “these materials promoted working together, family involvement, fun learning, and a chance to promote a child’s self esteem in the work that they accomplished with these materials” and “I can’t say enough positives for these materials.” One hundred and ten bags were distributed with some bags specifically designed for Hispanic families.

**\*\*\*\*\*Child Care Provider Grants\*\*\*\*\***

Clarke County registered family child care providers were given the opportunity to apply for \$200.00 mini-grants to purchase developmentally appropriate materials specific to their individual needs. Nineteen of thirty- three (57%) providers applied for these grants with 84% of them receiving funding for equipment. Eleven of thirteen providers purchased items to enhance fine motor skills; twelve of thirteen purchased items to enhance gross motor skills; seven of thirteen purchased items to encourage literacy; nine of thirteen purchased items to encourage imagination and dramatic play; six of thirteen purchased items to improve home safety; and twelve of thirteen purchased items to promote social and sharing skills. Our providers are a group of dedicated individuals who continually strive to improve themselves through trainings, and to improve the environment for their children through the purchase of safety items and developmentally appropriate activities.



# Lakes Area Decategorization/Empowerment Board

Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, & Osceola Counties

## Contact for Area:

Cyndee Dather, Decat/Empowerment Coordinator  
1710 Gary Ave., Spriti Lake, IA 712-336-2555 cdather@dhs.state.ia.us

## Vision:

Our vision is that our community members will have a greater understanding of the needs of our families with young children, and that they all take part in supporting them. Our children will thrive and have the opportunity to live in a nurturing environment that is healthy, safe and stable. All community members and service providers will treat children and families with compassion and respect. Parents will be prepared to rear, teach, and love their children unconditionally, and children will be ready for life's challenges of school, relationships, and work. Quality and accessible childcare will be readily available to enable families to financially support themselves. In-home parent education services, comprehensive child care training, and in-home visitations of newborns and their parents are some of the essential services that will be provided in our community's support system to families with young children. Innovative and collaborative efforts amongst our community members and service providers will continue to insure the needs of children and families come first in an ever-changing environment.

## Mission:

"Providing services collaboratively to families and children from birth to 18 years of age for the purpose of improving the quality of life for families with children

## Overview of Community Plan

The Lakes Area Decategorization/Empowerment Area is located in Northwest Iowa and is coterminous with Clay, Dickinson, Osceola and O'Brien counties. Like many rural areas, the communities have a strong history of interagency collaboration in maximizing scarce resources to better serve families and children. Members of community organizations' have been meeting for four years to identify key issues facing the community and have determined how those issues might best be addressed to produce safe, supportive communities and to enhance the quality of life for Northwest Iowa families. Four major community needs impacting the 0-5 populations in these four counties were identified following 95 community meetings, combined with results of a broad-based survey completed by 350 community representatives. First, there is a major discrepancy between the number of children needing quality childcare/pre-school and the number of childcare/preschool slots available. Second, an alarming number of babies born in the four county areas have many health problems. Third there is a lack of in-home parent support services for all families. Fourth, there has been increased concern over the safety for children and families. These needs parallel the purpose of recent Empowerment Legislation and have created the impetus for construction of present programs.

## Local Indicators:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| -Completion of basic immunization series by age 2                      | -child abuse                      |
| -Low birth-weight  | -chemically abused infants        |
| -Teen births   | -Lead exposure                    |
| -Registered Homes/Licensed Centers                                     | -Scholarships for preschool       |
| -Number of slots in home providers in licensed childcare centers       | -Childcare Contacts and follow-up |
| -Childcare provider participation in educational in incentive programs |                                   |

## Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

- Best care for Better Babies (*'Healthy Children-Home Visiting'*)  
This program targets at-risk parents with children in the pre-natal or newborn phase and promotes optimum health and positive lifestyles for parents and children. A Universal Risk Assessment is conducted to provide early identification of at-risk families. Health professionals then conduct visits to voluntary participants' homes, focusing attention on the number of child abuse incidents, the number of chemically exposed infants, the number of children testing positive to lead exposure, the teen birth rate and other factors that jeopardize child and family health. New or pregnant mothers receive one-to-one assistance, are referred to other agencies when necessary, receive assistance with HAWK-1 insurance enrollment and receive help in utilizing other community resources from qualified health professionals.

- Parents as Teachers & KIDS ("*Home Visitation and Parent Support*")  
A home-school-community partnership, constructed through collaborative efforts, provides parents with information on child development from birth to age five and suggests learning opportunities that encourage language, intellectual growth, physical and social skills. The partnership provides in-home family support services with varying intensity. The program sponsors group activities, provides early detection of potential problems through screenings, increases participation levels in PAT and KIDS (in-home nurturing programs) and helps parents access community resources. Professionals work with families who are challenged by critical issues such as poverty, limited literacy, lack of problem-solving skills, inadequate parenting skills and a myriad of other socio-economic concerns.
  
- Childcare Preschool Environments ("*Consultants, Scholarships, Training*")  
Personalized home, childcare center or preschool visits by Early Childhood Education Consultants help caregivers understand what to expect at each stage of a child's development and offer practical tips on ways to encourage learning, manage challenging behavior and promote strong parent/caregiver relationships. Consultants work with In-home, Center and Pre-school childcare providers to enhance quality of child care services through direct educational technical assistance, mentoring, and support in addition to encouraging training that supports career and professional development. Consultants recruit quality childcare providers to increase the number of childcare slots in order to meet the child care demands of the community. In addition we are supporting 11 childcare centers to enhance quality by assisting them in attaining accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Preschool scholarships are available for children whose families meet eligibility guidelines. A Head Start model childcare center was developed and continues to meet the needs of children who were on a waiting list for Head Start and/or slightly over the guidelines. Fifteen mini-grants were awarded to childcare providers and preschools to purchase items that enhance their child care environment to provide age appropriate learning opportunities for young children that will prepare children for later success in school.
  
- Family Unity ("*Family Team Decision-Making Process*")  
The Family Unity Model assists in increasing safety for children and families, engages families and communities in the helping process, resolves concerns and strengthens families, creates an attitude of hope for families and those who work with families. Family Unity is a gathering of family members, friends, community specialists and other interest people who join together to strengthen the family and protect its children; Family Unity meetings evolved from the way families form a natural helping system to meet the needs and solve problems. By implementing the Family Unity concept in our community families have been strengthened by using an individualized course of action, neighbor networking/community network, and the shared decision making process. We believe that policy and practice is beginning to change within the Empowerment funded programs but also collaterally with and within the Department of Human Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Education, communities, including agencies, service providers, business and churches.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

- Childcare consultants are working with 11 childcare centers towards NAEYC accreditation
- Childcare Consultants provide regular monthly technical support by providing home/cent visits to 50 childcare provider each month
- Continued support and growth of the Family Unity model that assists in increasing safety for children and families, engages families and communities in the helping process, resolves concerns and strengthens families, creates an attitude of hope for families and those who work with families. Funding partners include Empowerment, Promoting Safe and Stable Families DHS/Decat Carryover, and Juvenile Justice and Youth Delinquency Program. This is an example of true collaboration where as funds, staff and other resources have been blended to service children and families.
- Developed Head Start Model program that serves 18 children who were on a waiting list for Head Start and/or slightly over guidelines.
- Collaborating with Child Care Resource and Referral and Iowa Lakes Community College to provide child care providers an opportunity to earn a Child Development Associate Degree and to participate in the Sate pilot Apprenticeship Program.

# Clinton/Jackson Empowerment Area

## Counties in Area:

Clinton & Jackson

## Contact for Area:

Jill Davisson Phone: 563-244-0575  
Clinton County Board of Supervisors Fax: 563-242-3154  
P.O. Box 2957 e-mail: supervisors@clintoncountyiowa.com  
Clinton, IA 52733-2957

## Vision:

*We envision people of all ages in Clinton and Jackson County working together to support, nurture and empower all individuals towards creating productive, safe and healthy communities for our children and their families.*

## Mission:

*To develop and maintain a collaborative system of needs-based services, implemented at the earliest possible point of intervention, that strengthens families and communities.*

## Overview of Community Plan:

With the enactment of Empowerment Area legislation, in 1998, came the opportunity for the Clinton/Jackson Planning Council to focus our efforts on our early childhood population, with a special emphasis on school readiness. Our Empowerment Plan included plans to provide:

- Opportunities for more children to attend school readiness programs by providing them with scholarships as well as expanding several Head Start classrooms to assist working parents;
- An expanded home visitation program for parents of newborns that offers parent education and support;
- Expanded daycare capacity in Clinton and Jackson County;
- Programs designed to educate and support area daycare providers in a variety of ways, including mini-grants to improve the quality and safety of daycare

In developing this plan, we combined and coordinated the efforts of a wide array of public and private agencies, boards, programs, collaboratives, and state supported initiatives into one coordinated bi-county system of services. This collaborative structure combines multiple initiatives designed to promote collaboration, local planning, and local governance. We have devolved our Decat Project, Comprehensive Strategy Initiative, Community Health Assessments, and Empowerment Area into one bi-county effort designed to address the serious problems facing our children and families. The planning process is focuses on addressing all children and their families, across the continuum. However, many of our efforts over the past three years have been targeted at applying this process specifically to children age 0 through 5 years.

With a combined budget of over \$1,000,000.00 annually, our ongoing collaborative services are integrated with new services that arose from the Empowerment Area process. Those services include Head Start Expansion, Second Shift Childcare, expansion of the Partners in Parenting Home Visitation Program, Partners in Childcare, Childcare Health Consultant, Every Child Reads and a Preschool Scholarship Program.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

### *Early Childhood*

#### Second Shift Childcare-YWCA, Clinton -

By offering extended hours of services, this program allows parents to obtain/retain employment that they might otherwise be forced to forego because childcare was unavailable for second shift employment.

#### Head Start Expansion

The two extended, single session Head Start classrooms are useful for primary caregivers who might otherwise be unable to secure early childhood care and education because they work or attend training part-time.

#### Every Child Reads

The ECR:BK program is offered to children ages 3-5 in conjunction and cooperation with bi-county center-based and in-home daycare providers. The state-driven initiative focuses on enhancing the child's kindergarten readiness skills.

#### Partners in Childcare

This new program provides voluntary comprehensive mentoring, support and educational opportunities for in-home childcare providers through home visits by a professional childcare specialist and follows the “Parents As Teachers” provider support model.

#### Childcare Health Consultant

This program provides a nurse with a background in pediatric and community health nursing who serves as a consultant, providing on-site consultation and training for childcare staff in various settings. The goal is to assure the optimal health and child development outcomes in a safe childcare environment.

### *School-Ready Programs*

#### Partners in Parenting Home Visitation program

This program, operating since 1994 as the first Decat-funded project, is a primary prevention program that offers support and education to all families of newborns in Clinton and Jackson County.

#### Preschool Scholarship program

In an effort to achieve increased school readiness, scholarships are made available to preschool age children who do not qualify for other programs such as Head Start or AEA Early Learning program.

#### Unleadt Childhood Lead Screening program

Unleadt, started in early 1995, identifies, tests and implements home abatement for children and families exposed to lead poisoning in conjunction with Well Child Clinics, schools and Public Health Agencies.

### **Local Indicators:**

#### Early Childhood Environments

- Availability and accessibility of quality childcare.
- The number of low-income children participating in preschool programs.
- The basic skill level for children participating in preschool programming.
- Employment of parents participating in programs.
- Improved reading & literacy of children and families

#### Health

- Children not receiving proper immunizations at age 2.
- Number of founded child abuse cases.
- Number of families without access to regular medical care.

#### Parent Education and Support

- Parental involvement with their children.
- Parents accessing parenting resources.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

- The Preschool Scholarship program has allowed 70 children in Clinton and Jackson County to attend preschool, who normally would not have. Their teachers, as well as their pre/post tests, proclaim significant improvement from year beginning to year-end and laud this program as a huge success!
- With carryover Early Childhood Funds, we offered two mini-grant opportunities for center-based and in-home childcare providers. The overwhelmingly positive response to this program was gratifying. Childcare providers are not accustomed to having money available to them to improve the quality of their care and were thrilled with the opportunity to do some unique things that have had a positive impact on their centers.
- The “core” Empowerment programs, Second Shift Childcare, Partners in Parenting, Head Start, continue to fulfill their goals and achieve their outcomes for the third year and provide valuable services for children and their families.
- Several new programs, Partners in Childcare and Childcare Health Consultant, provided much-needed services to area daycare centers as well as in-home daycare providers. These programs have been well received and highly utilized by providers.
- Every Child Reads: Birth to Kindergarten had 56 out of 58 participants complete the three training modules that were offered. The positive response to this program has been overwhelming!

## Dallas County Empowerment Area

### Contact for Area:

Sara Behn, Coordinator  
Department of Human Services  
210 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Adel, IA 50003

**Phone** (515) 993-5817 Ext. 233  
**Fax** (515) 993-5829  
**E-mail** [sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us)

### Vision, Mission, and Community Plan:

The Dallas County Empowerment Board's mission is to create effective community collaborations to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for all families with young children. Children will then arrive at school ready to learn and will reach their full potential. The long-term goal of the Dallas County Empowerment Board is to support all families in meeting their children's physical, emotional, social, and economic needs, which are essential to maximizing each child's learning potential. In 1999, the Dallas County Empowerment Board conducted a collaborative needs assessment process to identify priority issues for children age 0-5 and their families. This needs assessment involved review of local demographics, local agency service statistics, data available through county and state databases, and various parent surveys that had been conducted locally in recent years. Many different agencies and community constituents (including consumers) were involved in review and interpretation of the data, as well as in the identification of priority issues to be addressed through empowerment activities.

Over the past two fiscal years, the Early Child Coalition (ECC) for a Family Resource Center in Perry has continued plans to provide a central facility of preschool, child care, health, and resource services. Currently, there is a professional planning group called Concordia, Inc. who has been hired by Hometown Perry Iowa to facilitate community discussions and conclusions for the vacated Perry Middle School. The ECC has interest in renovating the building for a Family Resource Center.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding and Local Indicators:

#### **Lack of access to early prenatal care and follow-up services for all mothers and their families.**

The percentage of women giving birth who received prenatal care in the first trimester and women who received adequate prenatal care: Early intervention before, during, and after a pregnancy, including the provision of educational, nutritional, and psycho-social support in addition to medical care, is associated with lower rates of adverse outcomes such as child abuse/neglect, infant mortality, premature birth, low birth weight, and fetal alcohol syndrome. The needs assessment results suggested that early and on-going access to prenatal care is not assured for all women in Dallas County.

Dallas County is undergoing two demographic changes that are challenging the already stressed existing maternal, and child health problems. First, the number of births to county residents has increased by 24% since 1993 (425 births in 1993 to 527 births in 1998), increasing the overall need for services for pregnant women. Secondly, since 1994, both the number and percentage of Hispanic births in the county has nearly tripled. In 1994, there were 22 Hispanic births, accounting for 5% of total births in the county. By 1998, there were 69 Hispanic births in Dallas County, representing over 13% of all births. Language and culture barriers, low education and income levels, and the uninsured status of many of these families place them at greater risk.

Percentage of low birth weight births and infant mortality rate: The incidence of both has elevated in recent years. Using the five-year averages, the percentage of births in Dallas County which are at a low birth rate (less than 5 lb. 5 oz, or 2500 grams) is higher than the state average. Likewise, the five-year average infant mortality rate for Dallas County is higher than the most recent statewide annual average.

Number of home visits provided to high risk pregnant and post-partum women: Community Opportunities, the regional Community Action Agency, headquarters outside the county and provides minimal maternal health services in Dallas County. At monthly satellite clinics, Community Opportunities offers family planning, WIC, and some child health services, but no home visiting services are currently available.

School Readiness: The county needs assessment revealed that assessment and tracking of school-readiness among kindergartners is inconsistent across the county. Schools that conduct assessments use a variety of different tools; some only assess children who appear to have difficulties, others do no screening at all.

Family Self-Sufficiency: In Dallas County, 19.8% or 653 children age 0-5 live in families with incomes at or below 185% of poverty. About 25% of all births that occur in the county are to women who depend on Medicaid for health coverage.

## **Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

**HOST (Healthy Opportunities Starting Today)** – A voluntary in-home visitor program designed to provide support to expecting and new parents in Dallas County. The referrals can come from many entities including DHS, schools, and word-of-mouth. The Home Visitor is responsible for visiting the family regularly, depending on the family's desires and needs. A Family Support Worker offers information and services related to preparing for a baby, what developmental milestones to expect, budgeting and finances, effective and age-appropriate discipline, education, employment, and links to community resources. Due to the high population of Hispanic immigrants, two of the three staff are bilingual.

**Child Care Resource and Referral** – The Child Care Coordinator provides services to caregivers, parents, and the community to increase the capacity, and improve the quality, of child care for all families in Dallas County. CCR&R is committed to responding to the needs of the community for accessible and affordable quality child care by providing resources, education, and advocacy for children, parents, child care-givers, and employers in Dallas County. Examples of services to caregivers include ChildNet certification, trainings and workshops specific to centers, in-home providers and infant caregivers. Parent referrals who are looking for child care are processed in the Polk County CCR&R office.

**Child Advocacy Council (CAC)** – The Empowerment Board provides support to the Dallas County Child Advocacy Council. The mission of the Council is to eliminate child abuse in the county. In FY 2002, Prevention Concepts, Inc. has been contracted to provide coordination of the CAC's meetings, minutes, mailings, fundraisers, recruitment of volunteers and members, grant-seeking, and other coordination efforts.

\***Early Childhood Scholarships** - The Empowerment Board provided scholarships to families with children ages 0-5 to provide temporary assistance with preschool child care, transportation, or other similar requests.

\***Planning Services** – The planning services for a Family Resource Center are currently on hold due to a major planning process being contracted with Hometown Perry Iowa and Concordia, Inc. in regard to the vacated Middle School in Perry. More information to come in FY 03.

## **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

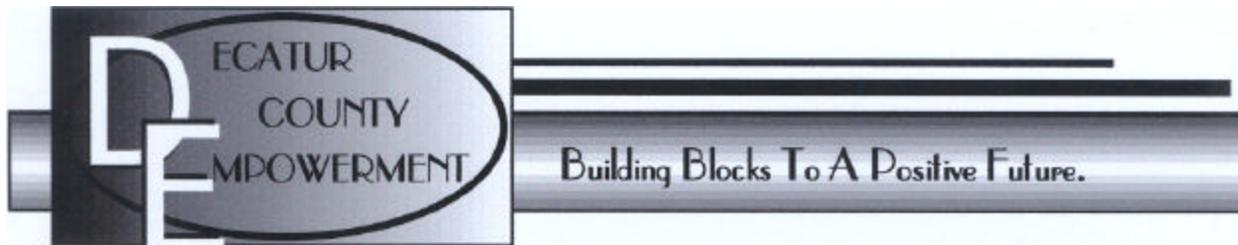
**HOST Program:**The "HOPES"-like home visitor program began in November of 2000 with a Family Assessment Worker and a Family Support Worker. During that nine-month period of time, a curriculum was ordered and implemented, a database system was constructed, and the bilingual staff person was carrying a full caseload after just a few months. Since then, the program has added a part-time bilingual staff. The project goal in FY 02 was to complete the Parents As Teachers training and implement a more structured approach for parents.

**Center for Child Care Resources:** Since the program began in March of 2000, the number of identified child care slots in Dallas County has increased by **302** slots, with **2** new centers opening. However, the number of Family Child Care slots went down by 53. The shift being more for parents to take their children to centers. The number of group training sessions offered in Dallas County to providers increased from **8 to 68**. *So Many Rewards*, an incentive program for providers to get providers registered with the State, helped four new providers get started.

**Child Advocacy Council:** The Council has historically had enough time to recruit volunteers and board members, complete minutes and send meeting reminders. The Empowerment Board believed it was necessary to take action in order to keep the Council going. Crisis Intervention and Advocacy Center employs a part-time person, who was able to fulfill this role. The Council has received a Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Grant to be used in collaboration with ISU Extension to provide a "Strengthening Families" series for Dallas County families, and is currently applying for the Young Families Initiative Grant to provide the "Family Story Teller" literacy series for families.

**Family Resource Center Planning Services:** The Board and the Early Childhood Coalition have continued planning efforts and currently are working on a location. An assessment has been conducted for what programming the community believed was appropriate for the Family Resource Center. The results demonstrated a need for health services for under or uninsured families, infant and child care, Head Start, and family educational resources. The City and County support the efforts of the Board and planning committee.

**Early Childhood Scholarships:** The Empowerment Board received additional funding in FY 02, and felt the most appropriate way to benefit the most children and families with a small amount of money was to provide early childhood scholarships for child care assistance, preschool assistance, transportation, and other items to be considered. It proved to be helpful for over 50 families in Dallas County, primarily for Head Start's transportation costs, and Perry Day Care's Play and Learn Program participants.



**Counties in Area:**

Decatur County and a portion of Clarke, Lucas, Ringgold, and Wayne Counties

**Contact for Area:**

Beverly Stokfes-Waddell  
907 W 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 1,  
Leon, Iowa 50144

Phone: 641-446-3801  
Fax: 641-446-8562  
E-mail: [famplace@grm.net](mailto:famplace@grm.net)

**Vision and Mission:**

To provide quality service programs for all children and families within the Decatur County Empowerment Area, inclusive of Central Decatur, Lamoni, and Mormon Trail School Districts. It is the vision of this empowerment area to foster healthy, nurturing, safe communities which will launch our children on a successful life course. Building upon existing collaborative efforts, it is always our intention to provide excellent services with quality and kindness. E. Overview of Community Plan

Building on the collaborative model, the Decatur County Empowerment Area supported real working relationships between established agencies such as The Family Place, Decatur County Public Health, Positive Parenting, Green Valley Area Education Agency, Head Start, Early Head Start and Child Care Resource and Referral to provide needed services to children birth to five and their families. The Decatur County Empowerment Area believes the motto "*Together we are Strong.*"

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

School Ready Programs :

- 3 Pre School Programs (Central Decatur, Mormon Trail and Lamoni School Districts)
- Pre School Coordinator (Head Start)
- Parents as Teachers program for 45 families (The Family Place)

Early Childhood Funding:

- Fall Conference for child care and early childhood providers
- Book bags for child care providers
- Pre School Scholarships
- Provider grants

**Local Indicators:**

Early Childhood Environments will improve in our Empowerment area.

- The number of students and direct contact hours of three and four year olds will increase in Head Start and early childhood classrooms.
- The percentage of students entering kindergarten who have attended an early childhood classroom will increase.

Increase in quality and accessibility of child care

- The number of liscensed/registered childcare slots in the Decatur County Empowerment area will increase in the trend line within the next five years
- Expand the number of infant/toddler slots available within the area C. Health

### Health

- The immunization percentage of children will increase by age two in the empowerment area
- The teen birth rate for the empowerment area will decline, moving below the state average within the next five years
- Child abuse rate of confirmed cases will decline within the empowerment area
- The percentage of low-birth-weight babies will decline over the next five years

### Parent Education and Support

- The percentage of parents volunteering and participating in classroom activities will increase
- The percentage of parents who access parenting/community resources will increase

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The foundation of collaboration that began in 1999 has grown stronger in Decatur County due to the continued efforts of all involved with the Empowerment Area. The Decatur County Empowerment Area is indeed a presence, a provider, and a supporter of children and families in Decatur County as displayed by the following: The Empowerment Board:

The board membership represents the entire geographic area of Decatur County, regular quarterly meetings are held with strong attendance.

**Pre Schools:** Significant new ground was covered when the established agencies of Head Start and three public school systems worked together to provide early childhood education to fifty three children in Decatur County. These children otherwise would have had limited access to any type of pre school. The number of children served has increased and a look at quarterly reports reveals a variety of experiences being provided...trips to the zoo, a dinner theater, an Amtrak train ride. Experiences close to home such as a visit to the sale barn...help to build all important community links in children's minds at an early age. These experiences taking place in a formal pre school setting are not only fun but also assist students to improve in the areas of motor skills, concepts, and language skills, as documented by Dial R Developmental Testing.

**Parent Education (The Family Place):** The Parents as Teachers program is designed to empower a[parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Parents are their child's first and most important teachers. This voluntary program establishes a support system for parents and accomplishes this through the four components of the program: monthly or at-risk weekly home visits, group parent meetings, screenings for children, and creating a resource network families can access. Helping families learn and access other services available to them within the community and county is the goal of creating a one-stop-shop resource network accessed through The Family Place. The number of certified Parents as Teachers parent educators has increased to five and the number of families reached with parent education has now reached over sixty. The Department of Human Services has linked with The Family Place to provide parenting skills via the PAT program. In addition, the program also includes specialized services for teen parents as well as a monthly teen parent support group for parenting and pregnant teens.

**Child Fair:** April 20 the following agencies (Head Start, Early Head Start, Public Health, AEA 14, Public Schools, Family Place, Positive Parenting, and area pre schools) worked together to provide a one stop coordinated evaluation and service program during the annual Child Fair.

**Early Childhood Conference:** "Keys to Unlocking the Minds of Children," targeted home and center-based child care providers from Decatur, Clarke, Lucas, Ringgold and Wayne Counties.

### **Additional Early Childhood Highlights Include:**

- Thematic book bags delivered to home and center-based childcare providers.
- Equipment grants for providers to purchase equipment...high chairs, fire extinguishers.
- Pre School tuition assistance



## **Caring CommUNITY**

Des Moines and Louisa County Empowerment  
522 N. 3rd Street, Burlington, Iowa 52601

### **Contact:**

Sandy Dockendorff, e-mail: [CaringCommUNITY@msn.com](mailto:CaringCommUNITY@msn.com), phone: 319/759-6244, fax: 319/392-4230

### **Vision:**

The vision of Caring CommUNITY Empowerment is a safe, stable, nurturing community where individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential

### **Mission:**

Our mission is to make our vision a reality by facilitating the collaboration of public and private enterprises in partnership with families.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

The Caring CommUNITY Board and county advisory committees serve as a means to encourage collaborative processes. The board:

- advocates for continuous improvements across delivery systems,
- continues to reach out to the community to identify gaps and opportunities for initiation of new and improvement of existing services,
- continues to strive to meet the needs identified by the community, and
- encourages effective (shared, data driven) decision making throughout the system.

For FY 2002 community members attending public forums identified the lack of quality child care and preschool openings, lack of child care for special needs children, the negative environments/experience of children, and the lack of knowledge of parents as the most critical needs. In addition, a means of linking families with young children to existing services was identified as very important to meeting the vision of our Empowerment Area.

Collaboration between our Decategorization Project and our Empowerment Board is accomplished through the Human Services Representative to both groups. In addition, multiple members of the Decategorization Project's Executive Board also serve as Caring CommUNITY Board members.

Through a rigorous RFP process, Caring CommUNITY strives to provide money for projects to improve the quality of life for families in Des Moines/Louisa counties. Priority is given to projects developed to serve the 0-5 population that are based on consumer/parent input and:

- develop a detailed plan to become self-supporting or otherwise sustained by the community,
- plan to enhance a current program through changes that will be made in service or program, including: clientele, specific activities, staff, and facilities,
- have a project plan that will develop linkages with existing community resources, and
- emphasize collaboration between like agencies and groups.

### **Local Indicators :**

State and local core indicators were incorporated into our plan which will be used to measure the overall progress for current and future projects in attaining results. Some of the indicators noted below may seem inappropriate for programs that deal with children under the age of six and their families, however, we strongly feel that if families receive needed services and supports at this early stage, the benefits will be felt throughout the lifecycle.

- Percentage of Kindergarten children who attended Pre-School/Head Start
- Number of licensed/registered child care spaces
- Number of licensed preschool spaces
- # of child care spaces for Special Needs Children
- Number of children under 185% of poverty receiving child care assistance
- Domestic/family violence incidence
- Percentage of mothers not receiving care in first trimester

- Percentage of estimated eligible enrolled in HAWK-I/Medicaid
- Percentage of families referred by Family Specialists to services who follow-up with those services
- Percentage of families with newborns participating in Home Visitor Programs
- Divorce Rate
- High School Drop Out Rate
- Fourth Grade Reading Levels

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

FY 2002 was the second year School Ready services were funded for our Empowerment Area. The services provided with these funds were:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Newborn Home Visitor Program in Des Moines County | Special needs preschool in Louisa County |
| Parent Education in both counties                 | A Nest Program in each county            |
| Begindergarten Bags for both counties             | A preschool in each county               |

Our Early Childhood programs included:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Child care/ preschool Vendor Vouchers | ChildNet training for child care providers  |
| Special Needs Child Care Coordinator  | Expansion of infant child care spaces in Louisa County                              |
| Family Specialists in both counties   | Character Education and Literacy training for child care providers in both counties |

**“Showcase” of Accomplishments/Results/Successes:**

Awareness of the need and opportunities to collaborate has increased among agencies providing services to families with young children. We have also begun to recognize that “making a difference” means many different things depending on the family in question. Services can not be “one size fits all” and developing a picture of what we are trying to accomplish becomes difficult as we “see” the variety of barriers families face. We have developed a clearer understanding of the needs of families whose incomes are above the level where most services are available and are frustrated by an inability to meet those needs AND meet the residual needs of the most deprived families.

We have been able to build upon our success in increasing the availability of child care during FY 2001 by providing both new and established providers with additional training. With the assistance of parents of special needs children, we have developed a program to help child care providers become more capable and willing to provide child care for this population and to match children in need of child care with providers trained and willing to provide it. Virtually all children in Louisa County have the opportunity for a preschool experience and those most at risk for developmental delays are receiving a specialized preschool. Our children living in the most deprived neighborhood in Des Moines County are also able to attend a preschool. All preschools funded through Caring CommUNITY include a home visitation component to strengthen the success of each child attending by getting parents involved with the school system early. Our Family Specialists assisted 101 families (349 children and adults) to identify needs and overcome barriers that hinder their ability to provide and care for their young children. Each of the Nest programs in our counties are growing and achieving results of higher average birth weights, fewer moms participating in risky behaviors and more parents with more self confidence in raising their children. Our Newborn Home Visitor program has been able to develop a working relationship with the only hospital in our Empowerment Area and 106 families with newborns are getting the information and help they need at the earliest opportunity to maximize the families’ success. Our parent education programs have helped 197 families see more appropriate ways of dealing with the stresses and opportunities of raising their young children. Begindergarten Bags with hands-on activities for children were provided to all children attending kindergarten round-ups.

# Dubuque County Empowerment



## Contact for Area:

Arnie Honkamp, P.O. Box 699, Dubuque IA, 52004, (563) 556-0123 (voice), (563) 556-8762 (fax),  
ahonkamp@honkamp.com

## Vision Statement:

The Dubuque County Empowerment Board will ensure that all children are healthy and successful.

## Mission Statement:

The Dubuque County Empowerment Board builds public commitment and works collaboratively with the community to ensure access to high-quality child care, health care, and family services for all children and families in Dubuque County.

## Overview of Community Plan:

- To gather broad community input on needs of families with children 0 – 5 (strategy: reviewing stats/data).
- To provide community constituencies with information regarding families' needs.
- To serve as a clearinghouse for information and a planning body for activities related to children 0 – 5. Tracking outcomes.
- To provide community education to increase public knowledge about Empowerment and child development. (example – Parents as Teachers).
- To identify strategies (best practice alternatives) to meet needs identified in the assessment (objective #1).
- To maintain a strong board and committee structure that provides leadership to achieve our goals.

## Local Indicators:

1. Healthy children.
  - a. Screenings
    - i. The number of children who receive well-child screenings at recommended periodic intervals, including dental, sight, hearing, speech, nutrition, lead, and immunizations, will increase 10% per year with an eventual goal of 100% coverage.
    - ii. Of those screened, 100% will access local services to address issues identified during screening.
  - b. Pre-Natal Care
    - i. The numbers who receive local pre-natal care will increase 10% per year with an eventual goal of 100% of pregnant women receiving pre-natal care.
    - ii. The number of women reporting alcohol, tobacco, or drug use during pregnancy will decrease by 10% per year with an eventual goal of 100% of non-usage by pregnant women.
  - c. Child Abuse
    - i. The rate of confirmed child abuse reports will decrease by 5% each year.
    - ii. Subsequent reports of abuse by the perpetrator will be reduced to zero.
    - iii. Subsequent confirmed reports of abuse on the child will be reduced to zero.
2. Children ready to succeed in school.
  - a. All children receive the opportunity to complete developmental screenings.
  - b. Family
    - i. All parents will have an understanding of child development and reasonable expectations.
    - ii. All families will have access to a variety of parenting educational opportunities.
3. Secure and nurturing child care environments.
  - a. Quality
    - i. Caregivers will be trained in early childhood development.
    - ii. Staff will be adequately compensated.
    - iii. Caregivers will demonstrate partnership with parents.
    - iv. Increase number of providers who rate "4" or above on the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) (Clifford & Harms).
  - b. Employers will offer options to allow parents to care for sick children.
  - c. Every child will have access to quality child care that best meets the family's needs.

- d. Increase access/availability of quality, affordable child care, including the following areas: respite, infants, drop-in, part-time.
- e. Emergency monitoring of child care environment.
  - i. All child care environments will meet and exceed minimum licensing and registration standards.
  - ii. All child care environments are monitored on an annual basis.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

This year Dubuque Empowerment has been operating four successful programs:

1. Parents as Teachers, which is a home-school community based parenting program designed to provide parents of young children (prenatal to age 5) with the information and support needed to give their children the best possible start in life.
2. Early Childhood, which is a program that provides grants to licensed centers and newly registered family daycare providers who agree to increase capacity and quality care. The program includes preschool scholarships, respite, training opportunities, and providing parenting information to agencies in community.
3. Kindergarten Assessment, which is a data collection tool administered in the fall to all kindergartners in Dubuque County. It is designed to track school readiness and identify needs of young children.
4. Child Health Programs, which are administered in two parts: a) Clarke College's student nursing program provides intervention, supplies, and linkage to medical providers for high-risk families, and b) the VNA provides financial assistance for medical visits for uninsured children aged 0-5 years.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

Dubuque has continued to build upon the long history of positive collaboration between the social services community, health, and educational organizations. This year, the board worked to reach new partners and more citizens. Specifically, in conjunction with City Health, the School Ready/Health Committee surveyed pediatrician records and also implemented a kindergarten assessment tool for the county. Future plans include possibly coordinating Early ACCESS through Parents as Teachers. Committee representatives include Keystone AEA, Dubuque and Western Dubuque Schools, DHS, Decat, Early ACCESS, Head Start, Bright Beginning, and Even Start.

The Child Care Task Force identified special needs children as high priority. Keystone AEA and a child health specialty clinic volunteered to lead training in this area. The task force also focused on increasing the number and quality of child care settings and on a jointly-funded project with the business community involving child care. In addition, the task force facilitated a grant to start respite a program, jointly funded through the Dubuque Area Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Both the Child Care Task Force and the School Ready/Health Committee worked together to fund and devise a training schedule for child care providers.

The Citizen's Advisory Council produced a databook to identify gaps in service and the need for a countywide resource list. The council also identified providers who will facilitate surveys and focus groups. Through this process, the council will gather information on family needs and ensure more effective use of services.

Three additional citizen slots were added to the board, and an orientation meeting and materials were designed to educate and increase participation. A public relations effort was implemented to promote Empowerment through various media. Through planning retreats, the board began to formulate a community collaboration plan. Initial steps included hosting a meeting with other organizations to share similar goals and examining models for collaboration. Empowerment will continue to develop the collaboration plan, improving implementation and identifying other potential partners into the upcoming year.



# Emmet County Community Empowerment Area



## Contact for Area:

Cyndee Dather, Decat/Empowerment Coordinator  
1710 Gary Ave., Spirit Lake, IA 712-336-3555 [cdather@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:cdather@dhs.state.ia.us)

## Vision and Mission:

Our vision is to build, through community collaboration, an environment that empowers and supports the well-being of all children and families in Emmet County.

## Overview of Community Plan:

Emmet County is an extremely rural county, with a population of less than 11,500, and the largest city comprising over half of the total population. Per capita, Emmet County demonstrates extreme needs. Compared to the State of Iowa, Emmet County averages are higher in every category from unemployment rate and children living in poverty to teen births, low birth weight infants, and confirmed child abuse cases.

Community assessments revealed three major areas to which Emmet County need to focus its attention. These areas became the targets of Empowerment's efforts: 1) improving the quantity and quality of child development and child care activities, 2) providing public pre-school experience 3) providing support services to the Emmet County's young children and their families.

In response to these needs Emmet County Empowerment implemented three major projects: Parent Support and Networking (more commonly known as SMILES), Child Care Initiative, and a grant to support a public pre-school program at the Armstrong Ringstead Schools. The goal of these programs is to increase supports and services for young children and their caretakers in order to achieve positive outcomes of the identified needs.

## Local Indicators:

- & Families have access to adequate numbers of quality, registered childcare providers
- & Childcare providers participate in trainings and professional development opportunities
- & Childcare providers engage in continuing environmental improvement activities
- & Families and children have a medical home
- & Children receive regular well-child exams
- & Pregnant women receive adequate care during the first trimester
- & Women follow medical recommendations throughout pregnancy
- & Teen parent pregnancy rates are decreasing
- & First-time mothers are attending prenatal classes
- & Community resources are focused on family and children's problems
- & Parents respond appropriately to their child's needs
- & Parent's exhibit a positive social support system
- & Children's development is screened at the earliest opportunity
- & Young parents are engaged in educational and/or vocational support activities
- & Children have the opportunity to attend preschool at age 4
- & Children demonstrate improved developmental readiness upon completion of preschool
- & Children demonstrate increased proficiency on literacy measures upon entering Kindergarten
- & Parents are involved in structured parent activities
- & Children are screened at the earliest opportunity for identification of special needs
- & Children are immunized according to professional recommendations by age 3
- & Families exhibit increased knowledge of Hawk-I and Medicaid programs

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

- & Parent Support and Networking (SMILES)
  - o Prenatal and Postnatal Home Visits and Immunization promotion
  - o Weekly family support visits through KIDS
  - o Parent education meetings
  - o Structured network for client referrals and links to community resources
- & Child Care Initiative
  - o Support groups for Child Care Providers
  - o Visitation to day care providers, offering support, resources, and training opportunities
  - o Incentive programs for providers who become registered or serve "at-risk" populations
  - o Assistance/Support to individuals interested in providing childcare
- & Armstrong-Ringstead Public Preschool/Head Start
  - o Scholarships for children to attend preschool who do not meet Head Start guidelines
  - o Library, music, and physical education classes for the preschool children
  - o Early screenings for hearing, speech, sight, height, and weight
  - o Services to link parents and/or their children with resources concerning a variety of issues
  - o Mentor program between high school and preschool students

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts:**

Parent Support and Networking operates under a program known as SMILES (Sharing Moments In the Lives of Every family is Special). Four agencies have combined efforts with Empowerment to make SMILES a successful home visitation program. The agencies involved are: Emmet County Public Health, Lakeland Area Education Agency (AEA) III-KIDS, Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC), and Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO)-WIC. The four agencies offer a "wrap-around" service, where needs are assessed and addressed (through support or personal referrals) by any of the four agencies to one another. The Parent Support and Networking project also collaborates with the local hospital, Even Start, and the Estherville - Lincoln Central School District.

The Child Care Initiative (CCI) is a collaborative effort between IDMO-Child Care Resource and Referral and Empowerment. The Child Care Consultant works closely with the Department of Human Services, Lakeland AEA, and Iowa State Extension Services, who provide referrals and information and can utilize the assistance of the Consultant when working with providers.

The Armstrong-Ringstead School District has connected with Empowerment to collaborate in an effort to provide a public preschool program to all children in that district. This public preschool is modeled after Head Start and receives support and guidance from Head Start as well.

### **Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Home-based services both to families and childcare providers have increased, as well as heightened educational opportunities for young children. Parents have enhanced their parenting skills by learning about child development with a hands-on approach via the in-home services. The Childcare Initiative has successfully recruited over 40 registered providers to Emmet County and this number continues to grow. As part of a community education project twenty-four childcare providers, parents and community members participated in a local daylong early childhood conference.

Funds were allocated to Emmet County Public Health to develop a prenatal education program for Hispanic families in the community. Educational materials were located and assembled for the program's classes. An interpreter was secured and is a vital link between the project and participants. The interpreter also assisted in translating during the postnatal home-visiting program. Word of mouth in the Hispanic community is opening the doors for the nurse to reach out to other Hispanic families in the community.

# Corner Counties Empowerment Area

## Counties in Area:

Fremont and Page counties

## Contact for Area:

Co-Chairperson Tim Nichols  
Box 165  
Clarinda, IA 51632

Phone: 712-542-5117  
Fax: 712-542-4608  
Email: [tnichols@iwcc.ia.us](mailto:tnichols@iwcc.ia.us)

## Vision:

Working cooperatively with all interested parties and providers in our area, Corner Counties Empowerment Area will attempt to provide seamless support for every child in Page and Fremont counties from birth through age 5.

## Mission:

The Corner Counties Empowerment Area (CCEA) will support their communities in nurturing children so they arrive at school safe, healthy, socially well adjusted and ready to learn.

## Overview of Community Plan:

In support of our mission and vision, and based on our needs assessment data, CCEA provides support for children in Page and Fremont counties. To that end, the Board attempts to:

- Improve the availability of child care within the area;
- Improve the quality of child care within the area by working directly with providers;
- Assist parents in accessing quality child care;
- Provide in-home parent support for at risk families;
- Provide preschool opportunities for all children within the area;
- Provide educational opportunities for parents of young children and their service providers.

## Local Indicators:

During the past fiscal year, CCEA has provided:

- Child care assistance for 13 families with 18 children;
- Child care specialist support for 12 months;
- Financial incentive to 2 providers for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift care;
- Material and equipment grants for 6 child care providers;
- The new So Many Rewards program supported 14 providers;
- Preschool tuition grants for at least 100 students;
- Growing Strong Families program assistants served 97 families in Fremont and Page counties through a monthly home visiting and education program.
- 1,400 parent support visits from B&BB (HOPES, Welcome Baby, outreach and teen visits)
- \$7,500 in incentives for Stork's Nest parents, enhancing home environments

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Corner Counties Empowerment Area provides a number of services in support of children and families. Working families may apply for financial assistance for child care expenses. Additional help is available for those providing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift child care. CCEA has helped child care providers purchase educational materials and equipment. A quarter-time child care specialist works with families and providers in the area. Empowerment funding allows for in-home parent support by HOPES and Growing Strong Families workers. Financial support is also provided to needy families for preschool tuition so all children may have the opportunity to attend preschool.

## “Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:

In less than four years from organization, Corner Counties Empowerment Area (CCEA) has established itself as a major advocate for young children in our two-county area. Our first goal was to provide child care assistance to working parents. To that end, 13 families were assisted this year with accessing affordable child care. In addition, help was given to child care providers to improve children's access to educational materials and equipment.

Under part-leadership, the child care specialist created the So Many Rewards program which replaces the enrichment grants for home child care providers. Enrichment grants for child care centers are still available. Fourteen providers participated in the So Many Rewards program, and six grants were received by child care providers in preschools or centers.

A variety of training opportunities were presented to child care providers in the two-county area, including Child Net. High/Scope, a curriculum model for preschools, was presented as a training opportunity. Technical Assistance funding allowed for the purchase of High/Scope materials to be given to four preschools using the curriculum. With Technical Assistance funding, Dr. Rosemond presented valuable information to parents and those working with children.

The HOPES program started in November 2000. Acting on referrals from child care and health workers, HOPES personnel provide a variety of services such as assisting with basic hygiene and social skills, advocating for clients with landlord tenant issues, locating food, clothing and shelter resources, teaching homemaking skills and assuring follow through with paperwork.

Home visiting, family support, and parent education ensures that parents provide the nurturing home environment needed for young children to thrive. The B&BBB/HOPES program started in November 2000. It is an intensive (typically weekly) comprehensive home visiting program, staff are trained in the HFA model of home visiting. Acting on referrals from the welcome baby coordinator who assesses homes initially for environmental and other factors associated with poor outcomes for infants, and child care and health workers. HOPES FSWers provide a variety of supports such as assisting with basic hygiene and social skills, advocating for clients with landlord tenant issues, locating food, clothing and shelter resources, teaching homemaking and child rearing skills and assuring follow through with paperwork.

By July of this year 1400 home visits occurred through this program at a cost of \$38 per home visit, which includes all costs to empowerment. Caseloads have achieved the 1/15 per FTE indicator that HFA and HOPES Iowa uses for quality programs. The welcome baby Program has not achieved 90% goals for the program because staff was reduced to 1/2 time, and the worker laid off for 3 months and absent another month. The program is collaborating with PHN to increase the number of visits by using their SW staff person to visit homes through the health promotion program. The two agencies will also collaborate by participation in the Infant and Toddlers program as planning moves into the new year.

Access to health care including primary and preventative health services in another essential element of childhood. A new addition to the CCEA programs was the Stork's Nest, associated with B&BB and Equilibrium Counseling. Funding is also received from Page County Public Health. CCEA provides funding for Stork's Nest inventory and storage of items. The Stork's Nest allows young moms to enroll in an incentive program which exchanges points for good behavior for items in the store.

In 2002, the Growing Strong Families (GSF) program received funding. The goal of GSF program is to help parents become confident and competent in parenting appropriately for the developmental stage of their child in order to give children a solid foundation for success in school. The curriculum includes parenting, nutrition, and resource management. Education is conducted through home visits.

The Preschool Tuition Grants program was started in April 2001. In two months, five area preschools accessed grants for approximately 20 students. During the 2001-02 school year, more than 100 students attended preschool on tuition grants.

One of the most successful ventures by the Corner Counties Empowerment Area has been the annual child fairs. CCEA has hosted two child fairs (one in each county) for the past two years. Each year, the number of children and collaborating agencies have increased. A free bicycle helmet is given to each child attending.

**Child Fair Stats (2000)**

**Shenandoah**

Children: 98  
Adults: 45  
Exhibitors: 17

**Sidney**

Children: 202  
Families: 101  
Exhibitors: 18

**Communities Represented: 18**

**Total Children: 300**

**Child Fair Stats (2001)**

**Shenandoah**

Children: 163  
Adults: 84  
Exhibitors: 14

**Sidney**

Children: 155  
Families: 80  
Exhibitors: 20

**Communities Represented: 12**

**Total Children: 318**

In addition to the above programs, educational opportunities for providers, parents and children will continue to be a major focus for the Corner Counties Empowerment Area.

# Building Families Empowerment Area

*Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties*

Contact: Ann Stewart, Coordinator  
2300 Superior Street  
Webster City, Iowa 50595

Phone: 515-832-9639  
Fax 515-832-9560  
www.buildingfamilies.net



## **Vision Statement:**

Building Families' vision is for families and individuals to live in a safe and nurturing environment that promotes health, independence and success. By the year 2005, Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties will create a continuum of supports and services that embraces children and their families.

## **Mission Statement:**

Building Families will be a catalyst by which our community works together to promote healthy children and families in Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties.

## **Overview of Community Plan:**

Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties define Building Families Empowerment Area. In the summer of 1999, Building Families developed a plan that addresses the needs of children aged 0-5. The plan establishes a continuum of services that enhances healthy children, provides children the necessary components to be ready to succeed in school, develops secure and nurturing families and secure and nurturing child care environments.

## **Local Indicators:**

- The percent of families with newborns determined as eligible for the program after screening who enroll in the in-home visiting nurse program.
- The percent of low birth weight infants.
- The percent of founded child abuse assessments.
- The percent of children who started kindergarten with at least one year of preschool experience.
- The number of participants completing the Every Child Reads training.
- The percent of children aged 0-5 with an IEP/IFSP who met their yearly goals.
- The percent of childcare providers who comply with the minimum requirement for quality based on the DHS registration requirements.
- The number of childcare slots.
- The number of children placed in foster care.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

Families Forward: Provided by the three Public Health Agencies in our counties, the program links with Early Head Start and HOPES to provide the following:

- Assessing each family with a newborn for risk factors.
- Educating parents on child development, parenting, and providing parent support.
- Health screening, health education, and assuring each child has a medical home.

Home Consultants: Child Care Resource and Referral provide one Home Consultant for each county. The Home Consultant program provides:

- Basic training for the requirements for a child care home to be registered, technical assistance to child care providers, centers, and preschools and environmental assessments to ensure quality.
- Keeps data on providers and open slots in each county.
- Is a referral service for parents needing childcare.
- Distributes mini-grants and incentives to providers to encourage training.

In-Home Substance Abuse: Community and Family Resources provide staff who works with families with substance abuse issues. The In-home Substance Abuse Counselor does the following:

- Provides pre and post treatment support to family members.
- Educates family members including children of all ages.
- Provides crisis intervention and develops safety plans for families.

In-Home Mental Health: In-home therapy provided by Gerard:

- Reaches families before they enter the child welfare system.
- Addresses restorative living skill development, family skill development, communication and social skill development.
- Therapy services designed to halt, control or reverse undue stress and severe social, emotional or behavioral problems that threaten or have negatively affected the child's and child's family's stability.

Preschool Scholarships and Transportation Program provides:

- Preschool scholarships to three and four year olds attending preschool.
- Transportation to and from preschool from their child care development homes or from family homes where there is no transportation available.

Preschool Prevention: A prevention specialist educates preschool children on safety issues such as substance abuse, sexual abuse, tobacco, strangers, and others.

Every Child Reads: Provides strategies for preschool and child care teachers to use in language development, reading and writing.

#### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes: ██████████**

Prevention is a good investment. The Governor's Child Care and Early Education Task Force report that each dollar spent on quality early education and care saves \$7.16 in future costs on special education, crime, welfare and health care. Empowerment programs are prevention based. Building Families strategic planning committee created our in-home substance abuse program. It reaches out to families who are having drug or alcohol issues.

The in-home substance abuse worker has assisted the sober parent in obtaining custody of her children and out of harms way of their alcoholic father; has assisted pregnant mothers in staying drug and alcohol free during their pregnancy avoiding exposing the unborn child to brain damaging substances; has developed crisis plans for families, has educated children on substance abuse, and has provided support to abusers before and after receiving treatment services.

This year the program helped 19 families, 37 adults and 47 children. Of these families, there were no founded child abuse reports, none of the children had been placed in foster care, and 71% of the families referred to the program are now drug free. As of last March, 93% of the identified users had remained substance free six months after discharge.

Building Families received \$568,127 in School Ready funds last year. These dollars will save \$4,067,789.30 in future costs on special education, crime, welfare and health care services for Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties.

# Hardin County Empowerment Area

## Counties is Area:

School Districts serving Hardin County residents

## Contact for Area:

Sheryl Kennedy  
Greenbelt Home Care  
1310—24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Eldora, Iowa 50627  
Phone: 641-939-8444  
FAX: 641-939-8450  
E-Mail: [hardinco@netins.net](mailto:hardinco@netins.net)

## Vision and Mission:

All citizens of Hardin County are healthy physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Hardin County Empowerment Area initiative is a partnership between key stakeholders representing education, health, human services, childcare, and citizens. HCEA is committed to improving the well being of families and children through the provision of a seamless service delivery and support system which ensures healthy lifestyles.

Key components of the community plan include:

- Continuation of the “Welcome Baby” program through Greenbelt Home Care.
- Increased availability of Parents As Teachers.
- Increased opportunities for health check ups, immunizations and lead screenings.
- Increased access to preschools by providing scholarships for tuition.
- Provide effective training to childcare and preschool providers that promote developmentally appropriate practices.
- Increase affordable, quality childcare to help parents obtain and maintain employment.

## Local Indicators:

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| # Teen Pregnancies             | # Pregnancy Smokers   |
| # Child Abuse Cases            | # Children Injured due to lack of Seatbelt Use                |
| # Insured Children             | # Families Utilizing Home Visitation Services                 |
| # Children Immunized           | # Children Exposed to Lead Hazards                            |
| # Children Served in Programs  | % Children and Families Utilizing Local Libraries             |
| # Providers Receiving Training | # Families Linked to Other Community Services                 |
|                                | # Children Receiving Preschool Scholarships                   |
|                                | # Children Enrolled in Preschool, # slots                     |
|                                | # Children Enrolled in WIC Identified as Obese and Overweight |
|                                | % Children Entering School Demonstrating Literacy Skills      |
|                                | % Children Entering School with Quality Preschool Experience  |

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Hardin County Empowerment provided an array of services from health, human services and education as a part of the local plan. These included:

**Parents As Teachers:** An early childhood parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters preschool, usually age 3.

**Every Child Reads:** A collaborative effort designed to implement the most effective practices in reading development for children and students.

**Welcome Baby:** Visits to new moms and babes in the home setting by a maternal health nurse.

**Car Safety Seat Program:** Car seat safety check clinics provided to ensure that car seats are installed properly and appropriate for the child.

**Child Health Clinics:** Child health clinics providing physical exams and immunizations scheduled throughout the county on a regular basis.

**HOPES/Nurturing Program:** An intensive home based program offering Positive Opportunities for Parents to Succeed (POPS).

**CPR:** Opportunities for parents, providers and community members to learn CPR in the home or center based setting.

**Child Health Consultants:** Visits to preschools, daycares, and home providers to instruct staff in safety on the playground, head lice control, infectious disease control, the importance of immunizations, hand washing, etc.

**Pre-school Scholarships:** Scholarships to low-income families to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in a quality pre-school experience.

**Pre-school grants:** Funding to pre-schools for purchase of supplies and equipment and to assist in funding staff salaries.

**“Book It and Bag It”** Book bags designed to promote parent involvement and build literacy and language skills by use of interactive toys and parent directed activities.

**Iowa Falls Literacy Committee:** Funding to purchase new books for three preschools in the Iowa Falls School District.

**Child Care Resource and Referral Services:** Funding to open and staff a full time office in Hardin County.

**Expanded Nutrition, Dental and Health Care Services** through WIC and Child Health.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

The Hardin County Empowerment Area Board continues making strides toward improving comprehensive service delivery. Collaboration has increased between agencies. The implementation of Every Child Reads provided an opportunity for multiple agencies to work in a truly collaborative manner, sharing resources and staff and planning jointing to serve families across the county.

During FY02 Hardin County Empowerment Area accomplished the following:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 139 children served through <i>Parents As Teachers</i>   | Implementation of <i>Every Child Reads</i> |
| 222 <i>Welcome Baby</i> visits completed   | 15 <i>Car Seat Safety Clinics</i> held     |
| <i>Physical exams</i> provided to 228 children   | 21 <i>Child Health Clinics</i> held        |
| 40 families served through <i>HOPES</i>  | 158 <i>Book Bags</i> designed              |
| 144 new <b>books</b> purchased for 3 preschools  | # <i>pre-school scholarships</i>           |
| 89 families of infants received <i>CPR training</i> in the home setting and 55 teachers, parents and community members complete CPR training in the preschool or daycare setting                             |  |
| 93% of 2 year olds and 100% of 4 year olds in Hardin County are <i>fully immunized</i>   |  |
| <i>Child Health Consultants</i> made home visits to preschools, daycares, and home providers, instructing providers on playground safety, head lice control, importance of immunizations, hand washing, etc. |  |
| <i>Child Care Resource and Referral</i> opened a full-time office in Hardin County   |  |

Diane Foss  
 610 Iowa Ave  
 Onawa, Iowa  
 (712) 423-9553  
 dfoss@dhs.state.ia.us

# HARRISON – MONONA – SHELBY EMPOWERMENT BOARD



**Vision:**

Our community will assist families in nurturing their children in a safe and supporting environment, which will provide the opportunity in preparing our children for a safe and healthy future.

**Mission:**

To ensure the collaboration within our community that will provide our families with young children the resources and opportunities necessary to have the highest quality of life possible.

**Overview of Community Plan:**

The Harrison, Monona, Shelby Community Empowerment Area (H/M/S CEA) has concentrated in the past on developing a parental support and education program for families with children pre-natal to five years of age. This program has been named the Learning for Life Program. After the development of this program in each county, other services supported by H/M/S CEA have collaborated with the Learning for Life to be able to reach and serve more families with children pre-natal to 5 years of age. Because of the rural communities within our area, many children do not have an opportunity to attend preschool. H/M/S CEA supports four different preschools within the counties, with the Learning for Life program working closely with each preschool. We have considerably increased the number of children that receive full-day quality care through the funded preschools. Childcare and early childhood education is a real issue in this rural community. The schools are helping our empowerment area make a difference.

The H/M/S CEA has placed expanding, maintaining, and improving the quality of childcare environments as a high priority. The first step in this process was funding a childcare specialist through the Child Care Resource and Referral. The second step has been the assistance our area has given the local school-based preschools. The third step started at the end of fiscal year 2002. Our area started collaborating with other local community empowerment areas to form a childcare initiative. Eventually local community partners will assist the areas to form an endowment that will help childcare provider's received higher pay, better benefits, and additional training.

**Local Indicators:**

*Healthy Children*

- ❖ Reduction of low birth-weight infants
- ❖ Increase the immunization rate of children by the age of 2

*Children ready to Succeed in School*

- ❖ Increase children ready to succeed when they enter school
- ❖ Increase children that meet IEP goals

*Safe and Nurturing Families*

- ❖ Increase parents participating in parent education
- ❖ Increase parents using health and safety practices

*Safe and Supportive Communities*

- ❖ Increase number of agencies and services involved in empowerment process

*Secure and Nurturing Child Care*

- ❖ Increase number registered childcare providers
- ❖ Increase safety and quality of childcare environments

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

Learning for Life is a program that follows the Parents as Teachers curriculum and incorporates other parenting education opportunities. Implementation of the home visitation program for families with children prenatal to age five will help assist in preventing child abuse/neglect, increase school readiness, and reduce the need for traditional Child Welfare services. Parent educators continue to collaborate with other services agencies and programs. All three programs in the counties work closely with the preschools, Head Start, and childcare centers. Each involves the educators with home visits, parenting meetings, and daily activities. Future plans are to start an infant home visitation by a local hospital's birthing nurse. The nurse doing the home visits will be the one that helped the mother during birth of the child. Keeping the connection with the family from the hospital, the nurse can work with

the family concerning physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs of the parents and infants. In continuing with the family the nurse will help make community connections that are in the best interest of the family and child. Learning for Life Program will work closely with each of the visits and make the connection with the family as needed.

Local school-based full-day and half-day preschools have been able to continue in our communities with the help of Empowerment. Without the support of Empowerment these preschools would be closed. This would eliminate childcare slots and the only source of early childhood education for the majority of children in a rural area. The purpose of each of the preschools is to help each child develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Each preschool works closely with the home visitation program and has made a tremendous impact on their community.

The Learning for Life Resource Room and Child Care Provider Lending Library has been started in one community in our area. The Learning for Life Resource Room allows families with children 0-5 to come in a use a relaxing room filled with resources that they may not have access to in their own home. This also gives parent educators a place to meet families when they are looking for other places outside the family home. A local school has graciously given the space for this room. The school is also assisting the community by allowing a lending library be set up for local childcare providers. Resources and materials have been purchased for childcare providers to use in their business with their children in their care. The development of this room has brought childcare providers together to plan and spend their mini-grants together as a whole. This allows for more children to use the items, instead of one provider and a limited number of children.

H/M/S CEA started a literacy program that collaborated with public libraries and local Head Start programs. Project PAL (Play and Learn) is a series of six book bags designed to promote family literacy and increase parent-child interaction among families with children aged 3 - 5 years old. Each bag contains an age-appropriate book with developmentally appropriate activities on positive nutrition and health, family mealtime, self-esteem, family relationships, and money management that correspond with the book's story line. The families read together and do the enclosed learning activities together which strengthen skills needed by young children before entering public school and provide quality learning experience for parents and children to do together.

A Childcare Development Specialist was funded to enhanced and supported services to parents and childcare providers. The service provides direct assistance in the form of grants to providers to help them meet quality standards. Recruitment performed by Child Care Resource and Referral by providing additional funding to all childcare providers to purchase items that will make their service safe and/or developmentally appropriate. Because of a large number of childcare providers that are unregulated the funding was distributed as mini-grants in the effort to recruit registered providers that are unregulated. The Childcare Development Specialist also assisted childcare providers by distributing CACFP tier difference funding for childcare providers.

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Learning for Life Program is a joint collaboration between H/M/S CEA, Department of Public Health, five different community school districts, Head Start, two local hospitals, ISU Extension, Child Care Provider Lending Library, Area Education Agency, Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, FaDDS, Department of Human Services, and child care providers. Children and families are benefiting greatly for the assistance they receive from the parent educators. The number of families served has grown since the development of this program. In 2002, 135 children from 100 different families were served. This has increased from the first year in 2001 where 73 children from 62 different families were served.

The Learning for Life Resource Room and Child Care Lending Library opened its doors for families at this end of 2002. On the first day childcare providers and preschool teachers were checking out many of the resources. This has been a collaborative effort between H/M/S CEA, Monona County childcare providers, Head Start Teachers, preschool teachers, ISU Extension, Burgess Health Center, Department of Public Health, Monona County Public Libraries, and Monona County community school districts. More data on the success of this program will be available at the end of 2003.

Play and Learn (PAL) Read Together Book Bags have 11 public libraries, 3 Learning for Life educators, and 6 Head Start rooms participating in the program. Since March the bags have been checked out 466 times by families within the H/M/S CEA. From those families completing evaluations over 3/4 of the families reported trying at least one new literacy building skill with their child when reading the book. Many positive comments have been received from parents and cooperating agencies, many can't wait for new bags to be developed.

The school-based preschool programs supported by H/M/S CEA have had so much success that there is a waiting list for the preschools. Each preschool has implemented the Learning for Life home visiting program into their school. Each preschool has reported the students are becoming very independent, improved communication between home and school, students are already doing better on the Kindergarten round-up screening, and teachers are beginning to notice social and academic improvements. Parents are more confident in their child's ability to succeed in school through the help of these preschools. The Kindergarten teachers will be assessing readiness in the fall.



# HEALTHY HENRY COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## HENRY COUNTY, IOWA

### Contact Person:

Linda Albright, RN, MSN, Healthy Henry County Communities  
407 S. White Street, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641  
319-385-6128 [albrightl@hchc.org](mailto:albrightl@hchc.org)

### Vision:

The vision themes for Healthy Henry County Communities and Empowerment are: **FAMILIES AND CHILDREN** are the cornerstone and will be safe, nurtured, and thriving. **DIVERSITY** is appreciated, celebrated, and cultivated as an asset. **HOUSING** is affordable and available. **SAFETY AND SECURITY** are basic needs insured by citizens and agencies working collaboratively. **EDUCATION** is progressive and emphasizes life-long learning. **RECREATION AND CULTURE/ARTS** are needed for individual and community growth, are encouraged, and accessible to all.

### Mission:

To make Henry County a better place in which to live, work, and raise a family through collaborative efforts.

### Overview of Community Plan:

Henry County planning events have identified the need to create parenting skills and a support network for parents and caregivers as a priority issue. The use of primary and secondary data indicates a great need to support young teen mothers. Three priority issues have been identified:

1. Increasing the availability of quality, affordable, reliable childcare
2. Creating parenting skills and support network for parents and caregivers
3. Creating partnerships with community, government, agencies, schools, and businesses

### Local Indicators:

- % parents accessing parenting/community resources
- # male caregivers involved in programming
- # of support network for participants
- Teen birth rates
- Percentage low birth rates
- Number of families/children with access to an adult mentor
- Child abuse rates
- # of childcare providers, # of registered childcare providers, #licensed childcare providers
- # of providers accessing Early Childhood Specialist, # of new childcare providers entering profession
- Graduation completion/GED rate among enrolled participants

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

1. **Mentoring Moms** is a community based mentoring program for pregnant and young mothers. Trained volunteer mentors spend time each week providing information, support and friendship until the baby is at least one year old. Young mothers and their mentors plan their own activities based on each individual situation, but with a strong emphasis on education.
2. **The Stork's Nest** is a national program designed to increase the number of women who get early and regular prenatal care so that more babies can receive a healthy start in life. Stork's Nest projects offer supportive counseling and referral services to program participants with infants up to age five. The Nest maintains linkages with key maternity and infant care personnel in local hospitals, clinics, and with human service agencies, schools, and churches. Families referred to the Nest "earn" points toward incentive items through a variety of health-promoting activities.

3. **Project REACH (Rural EARly Childhood)** An Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) provides one-on-one education to in-home and center based childcare providers. The objective of this project is to deliver education and support to childcare providers particularly in the rural areas where resources are sorely lacking or inaccessible altogether. The ECS provides hands-on information on developmentally appropriate practice. By working directly with providers in a supportive, modeling format, the quality of childcare is improved, early learning environments and experiences are enriched, and school readiness is improved. TANF has provided the funding for a series of monthly workshops for the providers on a variety of topics. Teaching kits on the topic are available at each workshop.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The Family Connection: The Nest of Henry County & Mentoring Mothers

- We have exceeded our expectations for the growth of this program: 40 young mothers are enrolled and accessing community resources! The Family Connection also serves as a meeting place for Promise Jobs, Book Club, and AEA preschool screenings. 15 families participated in playgroups, 18 in Book Club.
- Surveys from participants report at least an 81% improvement in self-sufficiency, stress reduction, and increased knowledge of growth and development, health and nutrition, guidance and discipline and utilization of community resources.
- Eleven active mentor-mentee relationships; a 220% increase from last year!
- Mentor pairs spent an average of 10 hours per month together, 30% of the pairs spent 15 hours or more together each month.
- Child Abuse Prevention Funds continue to be used to support parent education utilizing "The Incredible Years", MELD parenting materials and weekly playgroups.
- A Parent Council was formed to assist in decision making for the Family Connection. Three Parent Council members are now serving on the Advisory Board, increasing leadership capacity.
- Served as a resource to a neighboring town starting a mentoring program.

Project REACH:

- 76 individual center or home childcare providers have accessed the services of the Early Childhood Specialist. This initiative provides a collaborative opportunity with the public library, nursing homes, Childcare Resource and Referral, Head Start, the Community School District, hospital, mental health counselors, public health, Area Education Agency, local businesses, and mental health counselors.
- Instructor evaluation of participants revealed at least a 70% increase in providers understanding of child development, age-appropriate activities, and knowledge of community resources and improvement in childcare environments.
- 9 workshops for home and center childcare providers, ten community experts presented workshops, 6 Parent Infant Toddler Care workshops (total of 15 hours) attended by 11 childcare providers.
- \$14,000 in educational resources utilized in centers and home daycare for 330 children.

Collaboration:

The Healthy Henry County Communities Coalition consists of 25 representatives including business, education, health care, law enforcement, faith community, service agencies, Iowa Wesleyan College, United Way, county and city government, ISU Extension, action team representatives, and a representative from each of the four largest towns in the county. Monthly meetings allow and encourage discussion on initiatives that are focused on improving the health and quality of life in our county. Technical Assistance funds allowed for a strategic planning process and enhanced communication regarding Healthy Communities and Empowerment. We have experienced increased collaborative opportunities with Early Access, Early Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral through our programming. The Technical Assistance Funds were partially utilized to assist in a community/HHCC Board Strategic Planning. This process allowed us to further communicate with the community information regarding empowerment programs and outcomes.

## **Healthy Families Ida County Empowerment**

Contact Information:  
Jan Burk, Community Resource Coordinator  
104 Taylor Street, Suite D  
Ida Grove, Iowa 51445  
Serving: Ida County

---

---

### **Vision:**

To build, through community cooperation, a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that supports the growth of all children and families.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

- Early Childhood Funds: We hope to provide a positive childcare environment for children. Through the provisions of childcare related services our attempts have been to target the improvement of quality and quantity of childcare programs. This has been done through the offering of the preschool scholarships, the provision of childcare provider training and by making equipment grants available to area childcare providers. The Child Care Resource and Referral program provided through Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc. has been the agency providing oversight to their activities.
- School Ready Funds: Community resource and referrals has been provided through our Empowerment Coordinator. A home visitation has been established and has served 11 families this year. The local board also targeted lead screening, decreasing the incidence of child abuse, maintaining immunization levels above 93% and assuring that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. We have enhanced community awareness and collaborative efforts through car seat inspections and a community wide health and safety fair.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

Early Childhood Funds: Three trainings were held for 16 childcare providers to improve the quality of their service. Equipment grants were awarded to three centers and seven in-home providers. Scholarships were made available to families with preschool age children who did not qualify for Head Start or when Head Start was not available. There were 17 accepted into the preschool scholarship program and three families went into Head Start. Scholarships were awarded on financial need of 180% of poverty or below.

Home visitation services were established and patterned after the Healthy Families Model. Two additional individuals were trained. 11 families were served.

Lead screening was increased by Empowerment news articles on the dangers of lead poisoning. One out of four Ida County children are lead poisoned according to the Iowa Department of Public Health Program due to the housing built prior to 1960. We were able to test 159 children this year. One special lead screening was done at the Health and Safety Fair.

Immunization rates have been maintained at or above 90%. We currently are at 98%. Child abuse rates have decreased from 19 to 15 confirmed cases in 2000. A video on shaken baby syndrome has been used in the homes to educate the families on this subject. The number of children attending preschool and in Head Start has increased by 63%. We now serve 109 families compared to 83 families in 2001.

Empowerment sponsored a grant to the five local libraries. 188 children were involved in the literacy project for children ages 0-5. Empowerment also sponsored two car seat inspections. 45 seats were inspected and 11 car seats were found to be defective. 13 car seats were given out.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Ida County Empowerment has had a lot of success this year due to collaborative efforts within the county. The Health and Safety Fair is one of many examples. The board decided that we would have a health and safety fair in May. The following agencies collaborated with us: Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.'s Outreach, Child Resource and Referral, and Women Infants and Children programs, American Association of Lutherans, Ida County Sheriff, Iowa State Highway Patrol, Horn Memorial Hospital, Jackson Recovery, Ida County Horn Clowns, Ida County Public Health, Plains Area Mental Health, Iowa State University, State Farm Insurance, Farm Bureau Insurance, Blank Hospital, Ida County Public Health, Hawk-I, Ida County Anti- Tobacco, and Early Area Education Agency. This event was held at the Ida Grove Community Center. We had the 4-H Council reading books in a book corner, a cutie pie contest; clowns face painting, free lead screening sponsored by Empowerment, finger prints, age appropriate games, and car seat inspections sponsored by Empowerment. We had 100-125 people in attendance.

# Iowa County Empowerment Area

## Contact for Area:

Tammy Wetjen-Kesterson  
744 Clinton Ave  
Marengo, Iowa 52301  
319-642-1233 (Phone)  
319-642-7362 (Fax)  
[Tammywk72@aol.com](mailto:Tammywk72@aol.com)

## Vision and Mission:

The families and children in the Iowa County Empowerment Area will lead happy, healthy, and productive lives, utilizing services available in the fields of education, health, and human services.

## Mission:

It is the mission of the Iowa County Empowerment Area to be consumer driven, integrated, and Community owned; through networking within the community, an environment where children 0 to 5 and their families lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Iowa County Empowerment Plan included hiring a full-time Parent Educator for and implementation of the Parent as Teachers Program, providing scholarships to parents to assist in affording the costs associated with preschool thus decreasing the possible disparity in access to preschool education created by economic barriers. And to increase the quality of child care by providing scholarships to registered providers, to use to fund safety and health upgrades.

## Local Indicators:

### *Healthy Children*

- Reduction in low-weight babies
- Increase the immunization rate of children
- Increase prenatal care
- Increase coverage of Hawk-I
- Increase proper knowledge of nutrition

### *Children ready to Succeed in School*

- Kindergarten attendance rate of those who attended preschool
- Decrease in children identified for special education
- Increase number of Head Start slots
- Increase pre-school capacity through scholarships

### *Safe and Supportive Communities*

- Decrease serious crime rate
- Decrease juvenile arrests
- Increase employment rate
- Decrease domestic abuse rate

### *Safe and Nurturing Families*

- Decrease in child abuse rate
- Decrease in poverty rate
- Increase in percent of parents participating in parent education
- Increase in percent of parents attending school conferences

### *Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments*

- Increase in number of registered/accredited child care providers
- Increase non-traditional after hour care
- Increase number of CACAP participates

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

School Ready Funding was received in January 2001. In fiscal year 2002, the following activities were funded.

### **School Ready Funds:** Sustain and Expand the Parents as Teachers Program:

- Referrals were made upon the birth of a child in the empowerment area
- Parents were provided with information and support through home visits, and referrals with other resources available
- In fiscal year 2002, services were provided to 61 families, with 240 participates. 2091 units of service were provided to these individuals. Every face to face interaction with a child, parent, or caregiver constitutes a unit of service. These 61 families have been served a minimum of six times.

**Early Childhood Funds:** Early Childhood Funding came in July 2000. In Fiscal Year 2002, the following activities were funded.

- Preschool and daycare scholarships were provided to 14 families, working toward self-sufficiency. These were provided to families where their children were attending registered, licensed daycare facilities, or preschools.
- Registered home provider scholarships were provided to 4 applicants. The funds provided opportunities to enhance the health and safety of these homes, therefore increasing the overall quality of the child care services being provided.

## **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

Preschool Scholarships and transportation were provided to 14 clients and home daycare provider grants were awarded to 4 private daycare providers. To increase the comfort and safety of their facilities and the educational offerings provided to children.

The Iowa County Empowerment Board worked with many entities in the community in an attempt to increase the outreach and enrollees in the HAWK-I program. Emphasis was placed on integrating the outreach with free and reduced information that schools distributed in their start of the year newsletters.

ICE and Young Parents Network have collaborated to increase the impact of the PAT program in Iowa County efficiency utilizing the resources of both organizations and multiply the results achieved.

Grant Wood AEA and ICE have partnered to provide coordination for the “Every Child Reads” Program. 26 persons were trained. Each participant received the training, a stipend, and books to use in their classroom and continuing education credits. There were five training sessions, with a total of twenty contact hours.

Community awareness: Beginning spring of 2001, we posted flyers in local grocery stores, business windows, banks, doctors’ offices, Head Start, and libraries giving information on the Every Child Reads program and principles in helping young children read. We obtained a donation of books from Barnes & Noble Book Store and had a give away at all the local libraries for people coming in and getting information on Every Child Reads. Information also went out at the end of the 2001 school year about preschool book giveaway/reading suggestions to children in the local elementary.

Community Engagement: Each community had 1-2 members who knew about the program and were contact people with the local libraries. Businesses were contacted in he fall of 2001 and we received donations totaling \$1,200. All the licensed county day care centers and registered day care homes were sent information and contacted by phone regarding the training. All were invited to attend. Eight of 12 centers in Iowa County had at least one participant attending as well as 2 elementary teachers.

# Jasper County Empowerment Area

## Contact for Area:

Jody Gooch  
1109 S 5<sup>th</sup> Ave W  
Newton, IA 50208

Phone: (641) 792-6389  
Fax : (641) 792-1053  
E-mail: jkgooch@netins.net

## Vision and Mission:

The Jasper County Empowerment Area shall be a community of thriving families composed of one or more members. The community shall embrace thriving families as the most positive way to improve the quality of life for all those living here and to ensure the well-being of the community.

Each sector of the community, non-profit, for profit and volunteer shall combine and maximize all types of resources to afford and deliver the targeted services necessary to allow families to thrive. An active, visionary Empowerment Area Board directs this collaborative effort.

A thriving family shall be identified according to the following criteria, depending on the number, ages, and relationships in each family. Thriving families have:

- ***a sense of personal dignity and worth*** for themselves and others.
- ***shelter of choice***, which requires less than 1/3 of the family's income and where each family member feels safe and secure in the home and neighborhood.
- ***good nutrition*** with the ability to afford a variety of foods and to eat balanced scheduled meals. They also have the knowledge to use the foods and equipment to safely prepare meals.
- ***quality healthcare*** established with health professionals, covered by comprehensive insurance. They practice preventative medicine.
- ***drug-free lifestyles*** including avoidance of illegal substance and tobacco. Family members are knowledgeable of and follow low risk guidelines to avoid the development of alcoholism and other drug addiction. People recovering from alcoholism or other drug addiction follow appropriate treatment recommendations and recovery programs. Children are taught life-style risk reduction skills.
- ***gainful employment*** and they are developing transferable skills. Employed members have comprehensive employment packages and steady advancement in their chosen careers
- ***adequate income*** and a budget to allow family choices with at least 10% going to savings. They have established a relationship with a financial institution, regularly pay bills, and manage their debt load without depriving family members.
- ***parenting skills*** to enable children in the family to live with mutually agreed upon rules and age appropriate expectations. Children enjoy their parent(s); becoming happier and better adjusted socially.
- ***quality child care*** to enable working parents to enhance the development of their children and be more productive in the workplace.
- ***strong family relations*** with members of the immediate family living together. They consistently nurture and care for each other. Members have a strong supportive network of friends and extended family members.
- ***life-long learning goals*** are part of the adults' life plans. They graduate high school, set and pursue long-range career and personal goals, and have training beyond their secondary education.
- ***children's education*** is a priority. Children are enrolled in preschool education. Families support opportunities for learning and assist their children in developing good relationships with their peers.

The Jasper County Empowerment plan was based on information gained from reviewing data from existing surveys, assessing existing resources, and collaborating groups. Analysis of that information assisted the Jasper County Empowerment Area Board to determine the following priorities as related to the legislative intent of the Statewide Empowerment Initiative.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Jasper County Empowerment Board will develop a coordinated, central point of entry for families with children under the age of five. This will be accomplished through home visitation services to Jasper County residents who have a newborn child. This project will help to ensure that all children are healthy and all families are secure and nurturing.

The Jasper County empowerment Board will insure that parents with a child between the ages of birth and five have access to the Parents as Teachers Program or other parent education opportunities. This will help to insure that all children are equipped with the skill necessary to succeed in school and that all families are safe and secure.

The Board will work to increase the quality and availability of childcare options for Jasper County families. This will insure that the children of working parents have access to secure and nurturing opportunities.

### **Indicators:**

1. Increased number of families that accept a home visit
2. Increased number of families who participate in the PAT program
3. Increased number of schools who distribute school readiness bags
4. Increase positive family interactions
5. Decreased child abuse and neglect
6. Increased health status of children 0-5
7. Increased number of children with access to health insurance
8. Decrease number of children who enter school with developmental delays
9. Increased basic skill level of children
10. Increased parents knowledge of normal child development
11. Increased family awareness of existing community resources
12. Increased quality of available child care.
13. Increased communication and collaboration between service providers

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The Home Visiting program at Skiff Home Care provides an in home nurse to visit new born children in Jasper County. Personalized calendars are offered to each family containing appropriate developmental, nutrition, health, and safety information for the child at each stage of development. In addition Denver Developmental Screening is available and encouraged for children at 6 months, 1,2,3,4, and 5 years.

The Jasper County Child Abuse Prevention Council sponsors the Parents As Teachers program as an in-home effort to educate parents about child development and appropriate parental expectations. Through this program crisis care needs are sometimes identified, and support made possible. Developmental screening is also made available in families not receiving visits from Skiff Home Care.

A full-time Jasper County Child Care Coordinator and Educator directs a child care program contracted between Child Care Resource and Referral and Iowa State Extension. The position is housed in the Extension office and supervised by the Extension director under contract with the Empowerment board and the Extension Council. An Advisory Council meets with the Coordinator as outlined in the Empowerment bylaws. The Coordinator provides educational opportunities, works to develop additional child care based on community need, and assists child care providers to become certified. The Coordinator also supervises a part-time employed home consultant.

Jasper County Extension provides “Learning Bags” to children in Jasper County at Kindergarten Round-up. The bag contains educational materials to enhance school readiness skills; e.g., scissors, coins, crayons, etc.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

All programs funded the past year are increasing collaborative efforts within the community and are reaching or exceeding goals: The Skiff Home Visiting program is expanding into homes where babies were born outside the county; visits continue to identify children at risk for abuse, neglect, and developmental delays. The Parents as Teachers program has added more teachers and others await funding for training to increase parents’ knowledge of normal child development, age appropriate expectations and activities, and behavior management. Support to Crisis Care was available to assist in reducing potential child abuse. The Child Care coordinator continues to increase support to a growing number of providers and parents with the addition of a part-time home consultant; training opportunities, certification incentives and scholarships continue to positively affecting the quality and quantity of community child care as well; a providers support group has organized. The Learning Bag project is popular with teachers and parents of kindergarteners – all county school districts are participating; an evaluation component is planned as a collaborative effort with the schools. Technical Assistance funds have provided extra training for all programs and afforded a website, new logo and brochure.

## JEFFERSON / KEOKUK EMPOWERMENT AREA

### Counties in Area:

Jefferson and Keokuk

### Contact for Area:

Sandy Stever; PO Box 987; Fairfield, IA 52556  
641-472-5011; fax 641-472-3519; sstever@dhs.state.ia.us



### Vision and Mission:

“Through community partnering and collaborative efforts, all families and children within the Jefferson / Keokuk Empowerment Area will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment.”

### Overview of Community Plan:

- Provide opportunities and support so families will be safe, healthy and nurturing. Increase the parent and/or caregiver knowledge and/or skills.
- Provide early opportunities, motivation and support for families to maximize children's development. Maximize the development of young children from Birth to age 5.
- Provide opportunities for the Community to be involved in the Empowerment Process. Increase the community awareness of identified needs for children from Birth to age 5 and their families to continue the expansion of the Jefferson/Keokuk Empowerment Area.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

- Parents as Teachers Program to assist parents in being their child's first teacher
- Newborn Home Visits and Immunizations for healthier newborns
- Hawk-I to assist parents in well baby check-ups and a healthier child to start school
- NEST to help pregnant parents from pre-birth through age 2 to utilize better parenting skills.
- Home Childcare Consultant and accessible, quality childcare to expand quality registered / licensed homes.
- Program Support and Expansion to expand hours, better staff ratio and infant care cost. Purchase equipment for expansion of two daycare centers. Focus on expansion of the infant/toddler spaces.
- Professional Develop Grants up to \$1000/grant for in-house professional development for staff. Cover costs of trainers and materials for training. Meant for groups training to maintain licensing certification.
- Child Net Training Offered to 10 Providers and included provider stipends.
- Child Development Training Materials for 40 care providers & toys.
- Special Needs Childcare Support Program Support 05 special needs children & families with care. Example, may use for provider training or equipment or ratio help.
- Provider Training Training stipends of \$50.00 for providers who attend training to defray costs of training, mileage and/or childcare for their children.
- Resource Materials for Providers Books on Health & Safety, Activities, and general child development and care for 6 Centers and 28 registered homes @ \$50.00 each.
- Childcare Financial Support Grants for lower income families needing childcare to maintain employment.
- Crisis Childcare to help recruit needed crisis childcare homes and connect families to them when a crisis occurs.

### Local Indicators:

#### Increase the parent and/or caregiver knowledge and/or skills

- # of families receiving support in order to find affordable, safe, quality care for their children
- # of registered family childcare providers
- # of registered family childcare providers
-

- # of families participating in parent group meetings
- # of families participating in home visiting / family support groups / PAT and NEST

*Maximize the development of young children from Birth to age 5*

- # of slots in day care homes and centers that support children with special needs
- # of providers obtaining information and support in order to improve professionalism and quality care environments
- # of children entering kindergarten demonstrating developmental appropriate skills for their age
- # of families participating in home visiting / family support programs
- % of PAT children with immunizations up-to-date
- % of PAT children receiving dental screenings
- # of children participating in hawk-i



**The Following is our "Showcase" of just one Collaboration Effort we are proud of:**

Keokuk County Parents As Teachers (PAT) received a referral from Keokuk County Public Health Home Consultant in June of 2001. The mother was in her 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy. After the child was born, there were concerns from the hospital that the child might be deaf in her right ear.

The family lives in a very rural community with no family members in the state. They have one running vehicle, which dad uses to get to work, and no telephone. Prior to delivery of their child, collaboration between the PAT, Southern Iowa Economic Development Association (SIEDA) Community Resource Center Coordinator, Jefferson County Human Resource Center, and the Jefferson, Keokuk and Washington Decategorization Project, a track phone and calling cards were purchased and made available to the family so mom would have access to a phone if her water broke while dad was not home.

Mom was referred to SIEDA's Adult Education program and is currently working on her GED. She is learning to read maps and is towards the goal of taking her Iowa Driver's License exam soon. Mom is very excited about her attempts to improve her well being and is anxious to begin looking for employment after completing her GED work.

At the 4-month post-natal visit by PAT Educator, the infant was responding to sounds in her right ear but not in her left ear. Her eyes would track, but were beginning to cross. A referral was made to the Area Education Agency (AEA) audiologist for hearing and the family was transported to this appointment. The following month, the family was transported for immunizations. The infant did not pass the hearing exam and was referred to an Ears Nose and Throat specialist. While AEA was administering the hearing exam, it was noticed that the infant had some muscle (tone) stiffness. Mom was shown some exercises and massages to do with the infant and after some work with the infant, the infant was able to get up on all fours, which made the mother cry tears of joy. The infant finally received tubes in her ears.

The PAT educator also transported the family to the Women Infant and Children (WIC) clinic so they could receive some help with formula. The Educator also assisted the family in getting a car seat from the Sigourney Police Chief who also taught the mother the correct way to install it. The family is working with a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher from AEA and is also looking at some physical therapy due to questions arising regarding the infant's legs and not cruising.

Dad has purchased mom a day planner to keep track of all the appointments and people coming into the home. Not long ago, the family went to Missouri to visit extended family and mom was able to recognize in another infant some signs of needing more tummy time.

This family has remained together and is getting identified help from numerous agencies. This family and infant, without this involvement, may have been otherwise overlooked or these concerns found at a much later date when corrections may not have been able to be made. Through our local Jefferson / Keokuk Community Empowerment Area this is just one example of many of the wonderful things our Empowerment Programs do for the families and children in our resource-poor area! On behalf of the Board and Advisory members, the Jefferson/Keokuk Empowerment Area wishes to give thanks to all of the folks who make Community Empowerment possible!

# JOHNSON COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA

## Contact for Area:

Laurie Nash  
Early Childhood Specialist  
1500 Sycamore Street  
Iowa City IA 52240

Phone (319) 339-6179  
FAX (319) 338-9139  
e-mail [Empower@inav.net](mailto:Empower@inav.net)  
[www.jcempowerment.org](http://www.jcempowerment.org)

## Vision and Mission:

The Johnson County Empowerment Area strives for safe and healthy children and families at home and in the community. The Empowerment Area is a place where all people share responsibility for creating safe and healthy conditions in which to learn, work, and live. The goal of the Empowerment programs is to ensure that young children are properly nurtured and stimulated in safe, healthy, and stimulating environments so that they are ready to learn and succeed when they enter kindergarten. The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board will lead the community in responding to human needs through public/private collaborative partnerships.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Johnson County Empowerment Area Plan addresses early childhood environments for children prenatal to age five years. The Plan includes three primary components: early education, health, and parent education/family support. Community Work Groups have been designated for each area of the Plan to develop and support implementation strategies. An Early Childhood Specialist provides consultation and training to families, early education providers, participating staff at family resource centers, Community Work Groups, and the general public. Priorities in each of the three primary components include:

**Early Education:** improving availability, accessibility, and quality of early childhood environments outside of the home.

**Parent Education/Family Support:** encouraging safe, stable, nurturing home environments by providing neighborhood based services and building natural networks of support within neighborhoods.

**Health:** increasing access to quality health care for children, early identification of health concerns, increasing accessibility of health insurance for children, and providing consultation to child care providers.

Johnson County has a long history of successful cross-system collaboration. For several years, our efforts have been directed towards the dual goals of achieving measurable results for children and families and the creation of a service delivery system that is integrated, preventive, accessible, and efficient. These collaborations provide a crucial foundation for the success of the Johnson County Empowerment Area. The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board is working to formalize the existing relationships among the health, education, and human service communities and to coordinate the identified agreed-upon community priorities in to a comprehensive community plan.

## Local Indicators:

The **primary indicators** being measured for the Johnson County Empowerment Area are:

1. rate of low birth weight births
2. Immunization rate at age 2 years
3. teen birth rate
4. Number of founded child abuse reports
5. incidence of abuse in child care settings
6. Kindergarten readiness
7. number of child care slots; including percent for children birth to two years and percent that are licensed/registered/NAEYC accredited

## Summary of Selected Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

### Early Education

**Best Beginnings:** Community Coordinated Child Care (4Cs) program to recruit and increase quality of home providers of infant child care. Includes a class, equipment, training vouchers, resource materials, support and home visits.

**Continue Care:** Temporary child care funding to assist families to maintain stability for a child in their current child care arrangement even though a family situation has changed.

**Handicare Wraparound Child Care:** Child care funding to expand existing State Assisted Child Care and/or Promise Jobs part-day/part-year child care slots into full-time/full-year slots.

**Home Child Care Mentor Program:** 4Cs program to recruit, retain, and increase quality of home based child care. Child Care Consultant provides technical support, resource information, equipment, materials, and training stipends.

**ICCS D Twain Preschool Before-And-After School:** Before -and-after school care for the Twain Preschool program so students may attend 7:30 am-5:30 pm in their classroom, providing consistency in early childhood environments.

**Play Together, Learn Together:** 4Cs program of neighborhood-based, two-part workshops for home child care providers and the children in their care. Includes activity centers, equipment, provider networking, and resource information.

**PREP (Preschoolers Reaching Educational Potential):** Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County summer school readiness program. Preschool program, parent consultation, and home visits create an early link between home and school.

**Little Engine Preschool:** Preschool scholarships to children in the 4-year-old class and to assist with costs associated with opening a second 3-year-old class for rural area without Head Start access.

**Shared Visions Programs:** Funding to 7 Shared Visions programs to compensate for the shortfall caused by state budget cuts.

#### Parent Education and Family Support

**Family Support Program:** Home visiting program which assists families in learning about child growth and development and provides assistance locating quality child care, accessing health care, and providing a child-safe environment. Home visits focus on observing child behavior and development and applying parenting knowledge on a daily basis. Offered through 3 community based agencies at 6 local sites.

**Informal Networking Mini-Grants:** Offered through 4 community based agencies, provide opportunities for families to participate in Family Fun Nights, Parent Support Groups, Neighborhood Advisory Councils, Health Fairs, Play Groups, and educational programs. Provide funds to build resource and toy lending libraries for families prenatal to 3 years.

**Joint Parent Education Project:** A six-week parenting session offered at the Iowa Children's Museum. The workshop objectives are to enhance parent support and education, build support networks, reduce isolation, and promote positive parent-child interactions.

#### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

**Community Resource Council (CRC):** The Community Resource Council is a partnership with representation from many human service agencies in Johnson County. The first participants in the CRC were those service providers currently serving the Johnson County Empowerment Area, but the Council has grown to include providers who may work cooperatively with Empowerment but not receive direct funding.

**Joint Parent Education Project:** In response to an Empowerment request for informal networking proposals, staff from six agencies developed a joint proposal for a parenting education program. As a result, a parent education class was offered which utilized the expertise of a variety of individuals and the resources of many agencies. All of the agencies contributed staff and in-kind resources, as each agency boasts expertise in a variety of areas. Through an organized system of planning and communication a variety of family needs were met without developing competing programs.

**Decat:** The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board has enjoyed a strong partnership with the Johnson County Decat Project from the outset of the Empowerment initiative. Over the years, Decat has provided in-kind staff support, funding for evaluation, and funding support for Empowerment services. Funding cuts in the Department of Human services made the continuation of any Decat funding – for staff or services – untenable, so the Decat and Empowerment boards have worked closely together to make the necessary transition. For example, administrative responsibility for Home Ties, a locally funded emergency child care program, was transferred from Decat to Empowerment this year.

**Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC):** Through Johnson County Public Health, the Johnson County Empowerment Area Board has access to funds generated through the Medicaid Administrative Claiming process. These funds have been made available as community-based mini-grants to address local children's health issues. Funded programs include child care provider training, car seat distribution and education programs, reproductive health and awareness services, no-cost pediatric health services in a rural area, purchase of mental health testing items, purchase of fire -safety educational items, and activities promoting awareness of adolescent services through the local Sexual Assault Response Team.

**hawk -i Outreach:** Collaboration with Department of Human Services and Johnson County Public Health to do outreach for hawk-i and Medicaid enrollment.

## Jones County Empowerment Area

### Contact for Area:

Rachel Menard  
500 West Main Street, Courthouse Room 8, Anamosa, IA 52205  
Phone: (319) – 462 – 4457 Fax: (319) – 462 – 5804  
[rmenard\\_jccs@n-connect.net](mailto:rmenard_jccs@n-connect.net)

### Vision and Mission:

Jones County Empowerment Area’s vision is to provide services to families and individuals through community resource providers blending their resources and expertise to enable and empower families with children 0 – 5, to access services and make choices that will strengthen our children and our community.

Jones County Empowerment Area’s mission is to develop the capacity and commitment for achieving the results of:

- Healthy Children
- Children Ready to Succeed in School
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Secure and Nurturing Families
- Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments

### Overview of Community Plan:

Our community plan is a collaborative effort of citizens and stakeholders whose commitment is to establish a caring community that supports families and children. As responsible caring citizens and agencies, it is our work to develop a system that helps promote the positive development of families and children. This system operates from the paradigm that local citizens with other stakeholders have the power and knowledge to create a community specific plan based on outcomes that is proactive and inclusive to all areas of the community. This plan promotes the development of families and children by engaging all members of the community, establishing a shared vision, a common language, and a collaborative planning structure.

Community specific outcome based programs provided by Empowerment are: Community Health Child Care Consultant, Jones County Family Resource Association and Community Health New Born (Hopes) Program, HACAP School Readiness Program, Jones County Family Association Provider/Parent Child Development Training, Alternative Services In-home Crisis Counseling.

### Local Indicators:

Local Indicators from data gathered by Iowa State University and Community Health of Jones County Health Survey indicate a need for support or opportunities for change for families in the following areas: stress reduction, affordable health insurance, supervised activities for youth, personal financial management, and employment.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

1. Jones County Community Health provides Child Care Health Consultant, a trained nurse, visits with all registered and non-registered county providers on a monthly basis. Monthly learning curriculum lessons focus on different topics such as fire safety, brain development, discipline skills, care safety, school readiness skills. Hands on approach to teach children to be safe in their community.
2. New Born Assessment is an in-home visitation program for families. Trained staff assess the needs of the child in conjunction with risk factors within the family for early intervention. This program is based on the Hopes visitation model.
3. The Jones County Family Resource Association provides child care certification classes, child development, strengthening family support and education, information and necessary referrals. Maintains parent library for community use.
4. HACAP provides transportation reimbursement to attend Head Start Programming for low-income families.
5. Alternative Services provides 24-hour response program for families, schools, and the communities.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

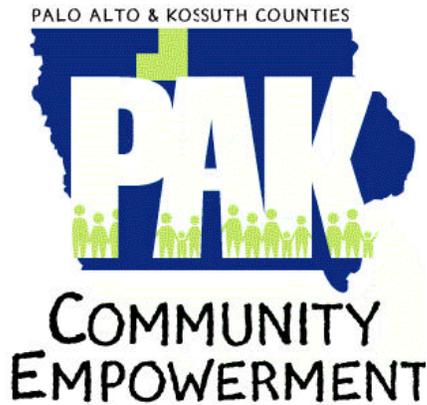
Jones County Empowerment Area continues to improve collaboration and cooperation within the Jones County Communities. This year we added a 24-hour crisis response program through Alternative Services and a Child Care consultant through Jones County Community Health. This has increased referrals between many agencies in Jones County.

Alternative Services has been able to meet the crisis situations of families with children through referrals from Juvenile Justice, schools, and the various communities in Jones County.

Jones County Community Health provides training for one staff to specialize in day care home visitations. This persona has been able to visit day care homes and collaborate with the Department of Human Services to increase certification of day care homes. Health and safety needs in these settings have improved.

The Family Resource Association collaborated with Jones County Community Health and the Iowa State Patrol for car seat safety checks within the community.

All community service agencies and schools have a representative attending the Empowerment meetings held monthly in Jones County.



**Counties in Area:**

Kossuth and Palo Alto Counties

**Contact for Area:**

Kristin Faber  
5253 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Box 38  
Cylinder, IA 50528  
Phone: 712-424-3211  
Fax: 712-424-3314  
E-mail: [kfaber@aea3.k12.ia.us](mailto:kfaber@aea3.k12.ia.us)

**Vision:**

Partners in the Palo Alto/Kossuth (PAK) Empowerment Area believe that developmental opportunities for children ages birth to five play a critical role in establishing lifelong patterns. Children in this population group are ready to learn and develop the perceptual framework that will guide their lives. Along with the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety, qualities such as a feeling of family support, positive identity, social competency, and a nurturing environment are essential for lifelong healthy development.

**Mission:**

- Provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for all children age birth to five.
- Provide training support to parents and other caregivers of the birth to five population.
- Prepare children age birth to five with the skills needed to be ready to take advantage of educational opportunities and learn to the best of their ability.

**Overview of Community Plan:**

The plan which the PAK Empowerment Board has envisioned will provide a seamless, comprehensive delivery system of family services to address the gaps that are currently present. The plan includes home visits to parents and childcare providers, education opportunities for parents and childcare providers, and lead screening for children to identify and reduce elevated blood lead levels. The vision of this Board has been and continues to be that children need positive opportunities to learn and grow, and by reaching out to those who care for them, we can accomplish healthy, happy, well-developed children who are ready to succeed in school.

**Local Indicators:**

- Improved prenatal care for pregnant women leading to healthier children.
- Expanded in-home visitation services leading to parents who are better able to:
  - i. Provide a secure and nurturing environment for their children
  - ii. Select childcare environments for their children that are equally nurturing and secure.
- Improved education for parents and childcare providers leading to:
  - i. Caregivers who are more knowledgeable about early brain development.
  - ii. Children who are better prepared to succeed in school.
- Increased number of childcare providers who have received child development education leading to a corresponding increase in the number of children cared for in nurturing childcare environments.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

- HOPES-like home visitation programs in both counties.
- Expanded KIDS program
- Lead screening clinics, education, and tests.
- Parent/Child classes
- Childcare provider support groups
- Childcare provider visitation program
- Educational opportunities for communities, professionals, parents, and childcare providers.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:**

- Collaboration – Bi-monthly Healthy Family meetings are held between Community Health Departments, KIDS staff, ISU Extension staff, CARE Team, and AEA staff.
- Cooperation – Local childcare providers have started meeting monthly to share information, ideas, and experiences.
- Cooperation – Childcare providers have hosted AEA staff at their childcare facilities for story time and enrichment activities for the children and educational materials for the providers.
- Results – The KIDS Program has expanded to serve children over the age of three and has removed risk-based criteria for participation allowing the program to reach more families and children.
- Accomplishments – Parent education classes called “Growing Together” have drawn many parents and children to a program which partners with local preschool teachers and uses local school classrooms. The program has been commended as a means to help children transition more easily into a preschool environment, as well as connecting adults with parenting resources.
- Success – Enrichment activities for children and parents such as “Little Picassos” and “Bubbles and Books” have been praised by the local media in newspaper articles.

# Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area

*servicing*

## *Lee & Van Buren Counties*

Beth Mohrfeld-Coordinator  
933 Avenue H, P.O. Box 188  
Fort Madison, Iowa 52627  
Phone: (319) 372-3651  
Fax: (319) 372-8921  
[bmohrfe@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:bmohrfe@dhs.state.ia.us)

### **Vision and Mission:**

All families living within the Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable, and nurturing environment, which will enhance their abilities to reach their full potential and be self sufficient. Further, our long-term vision for all families with young children is to have access to quality childcare, early intellectual stimulation, be free of child abuse and neglect and have the skills and services needed to be healthy and strong.

### **Overview of the Community Plan:**

The Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area is currently in the process of completing a comprehensive Community Plan with the assistance of Criminal Juvenile Justice Planning. We anticipate the Community Plan will be completed by fall or early winter 2002. The developed document will be a long-term plan for the coordination and allocation of various resources and efforts that benefit youth and families in Lee & Van Buren Counties. Numerous planning sessions have occurred to date. The completed Plan will emphasize protective factors that support healthy child and youth development. It will also focus on the risk factors that disrupt this process. New and existing services will be viewed as efforts that must increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for those who need it most. Priorities will be set for which measurable impact can be achieved within a set time period. Specific to our local Empowerment initiative, striving towards an emphasis on protective factors at the earliest age possible where a significant impact can be felt will be a major focus area in the upcoming Fiscal Years.

Our original plan submitted has been modified since it was funded in 1998. For FYE 2002, The Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Board discussed the projects funded since 1998 and voted to make changes in programming. The consensus was that only research-based curriculum and programming should be utilized in the services provided. The **Parents as Teachers & HOPES Programs** were chosen to be implemented utilizing School Ready funding.

Both Lee & Van Buren Counties are providing the **Parents As Teachers Program (PAT)** to families within our two-county area. Lee County has also utilized School Ready dollars to expand the **HOPES Program** to families who are at greater risk and in need of more intensive services. A **Childcare Health Consultant** position for the two-county area was developed and supported with Early Childhood funding. Supplemental funding was allocated to support the **HAWK-I Outreach Coordinator's** position.

The Early Childhood fund expenditures are planned for at the beginning of each Fiscal Year by the **Childcare Enhancement Committee**. This Committee sets short and long-term goals and outcomes while coordinating programming and services that target improving the quality and affordability of childcare to families in Lee & Van Buren Counties. The overall goal of the Childcare Enhancement Committee is to strengthen and expand the current childcare system to support the needs of families with children 0-5 while greatly enhancing the quality of care for children.

### **Local Indicators:**

- ◆ Decrease in child abuse & neglect
- ◆ Pregnant woman & newborns thrive
- ◆ Immunization rates are current
- ◆ Children & families have access to health care
- ◆ Children are ready for school
- ◆ Safe & nurturing childcare settings
- ◆ Children live in stable & supportive families & communities

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

#### Van Buren County

The Van Buren County **Parents As Teachers (PAT) Program** is a voluntary in-home educational support service that is open to all parents in the county. Ideally, services are offered in the prenatal stages of pregnancy and continue until the child's entry into Kindergarten. This program is open to all parents, not just those identified as being "high-risk". In addition, the **NEST Program** is a component of this project.

Certified PAT educators provide parenting support and information to families about their developing child. Visits are designed to assist parents in understanding what to expect in each stage of their child's development as well as teach appropriate ways to stimulate learning. Goals of the program include the promotion of optimal health, the improvement of family coping skills/functioning, the promotion of positive parenting skills, the recognition of early childhood growth and development, and the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect. Participants are also linked to a multitude of community service providers to fill needs.

The *NEST* is a community-based program that provides incentives for pregnant woman to have healthy babies and encourages mothers to obtain adequate health care utilizing the health care system. Weekly classes are offered at the NEST location covering educational and prenatal topics. Parents are instructed on how to reduce the stress associated with parenting while building a support group with other new parents. Both the NEST and the Van Buren County PAT Program refer families to each other and help to assure that all families access needed support from services available.

#### Lee County

In FYE 2002, Lee County began funding a new home visitation program, as well as expanded an existing one. A *Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program* was established in Lee County and the already operational *HOPES Program* was expanded utilizing School Ready funding. The Lee County *PAT Program* offers timely information about stages of child development to participating parents. Certified parent educators provide information on home safety, effective discipline, constructive play activities, social & motor development and language & intellectual development. In addition, parent educators provide health & nutrition information, as well as information on accessing community resources that are available.

Parents are invited to monthly meetings where they are able to share experiences, common concerns, and receive information on topics of interest to the group. Various resource individuals from the community provide information to families during these meetings. Throughout the Fiscal Year, parent educators plan parent and child together times (PACT). During PACT, parents and children enjoy activities together, and then parents review the activity and their child's behavior.

School Ready funds enabled the Lee County *HOPES Program* to expand services in FYE 2002. This program went through a rigorous accreditation process in FYE 2002 and became nationally accredited with the agency for Healthy Families of America. **The Lee County HOPES program was the first in Iowa to receive this auspicious rating!** At-risk families involved with the *HOPES Program* receive in-home visitation services focusing on parent education and support to families with children 0-5, which are based on a set of best standard practices or twelve critical elements. These twelve critical elements address the who, what, where, when, and why of the program. Goals of the program include promoting optimal child health and development, improving family coping skills and functioning, promoting positive parenting skills and intra-familial interaction and preventing child abuse/neglect and infant mortality and morbidity.

The Lee/Van Buren **Childcare Health Consultant** works primarily with local childcare centers, registered homes and preschools to enhance the quality and safety of childcare settings in the two-county area. The Iowa Department of Public Health Maternal Child Health Title V program reported the following in their evaluation of the Childcare Health Consultant activities: "The integration between Empowerment and Healthy Child Care Iowa is excellent collaboration and has helped with not duplicating services. Child care activities are very strong and working with non-licensed and non-registered providers is an excellent and advanced activity." The Lee/Van Buren **HAWK-I Outreach Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring all The Lee/Van Buren **HAWK-I Outreach Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring all children and families have access to health care coverage utilizing a variety of available sources.

#### **"Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Collaborative efforts continue to develop amongst providers who realize that the one and ultimate goal should be working together to assist the children and families in our area. This was the case between the two Lee County School Ready home visitation programs. A formalized, cooperative agreement was developed between the *HOPES Program* and the Lee County *PAT Program* to work in cooperation with each other in receiving and making referrals, as well as promoting all services available within the county. This is done initially by contacting new parents in the hospital following the birth of their child.

One major success in our area during FYE 2002 was the certificate of credential from Prevent Child Abuse America for the Lee County HOPES Program. Lee County Health Department was the first Health Department in the State of Iowa to receive this certification as the result of an in-depth scrutiny of the program. The certification recognizes the program as a provider of high quality home visitation services. The credentialing process attests that the home visitation program has met a set standard of nationally established, research-based standards, assuring quality service delivery.

The biggest example of cooperative efforts in the two-county area would be the work in progress of completing a Community Plan. This two-year long effort is close to being completed after many hours of planning, assessments, committee work, discussions and hard work from numerous partners in the two-county area. This learning experience has set in motion much discussion, which has led to changes in programming enhancement and ensuring funding results, not just funding programs. This has had to be a systematic change, which has been difficult at times for many, impossible at times for some. But, the commitment in Lee and Van Buren Counties is on making a difference in the lives of children who reside in our communities. Making that happen is only possible when we plan for results and outcomes and hold ourselves accountable.

## **Linn County Community Empowerment**

### **Contact for Area:**

Chris Kivett-Berry  
Linn County Community Empowerment & Decat Coordinator  
520 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405  
(319) 892-5721 phone  
(319) 892-5719 fax  
[chris.kivett-berry@linncounty.org](mailto:chris.kivett-berry@linncounty.org)  
[www.linnempowerment.com](http://www.linnempowerment.com).

### **Vision and Mission:**

The Linn County Empowerment Board has a vision to better organize community systems, work collaboratively across systems, involve local citizens and improve outcomes for children and families.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

The Linn County Community Empowerment Area identified the following priority areas:

- 3 Affordable, High Quality Child Care & Child Development
- 3 Children Safe from Abuse & Neglect
- 3 Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children
- 3 Family Members Free from domestic Violence
- 3 Families Have Stable Housing
- 3 Identify & Serve Children with Special Needs at An Early Age
- 3 Parental Care Beginning in the First Three Months of Pregnancy

### **Local Indicators:**

The following indicators were selected as indicators of the well-being of the Linn County Community:

- # of registered in-home child care providers
- # of licensed and registered child care slots
- # of comprehensive child development program slots
- # of subsidized child care slots
- Confirmed child abuse rate
- % of children with recurrence of substantiated neglect/abuse within 6 months
- State Kindergarten Readiness Perception survey – Linn County data
- # of civil domestic abuse cases filed
- # of children, age 0-5, reported as part of homeless family in a shelter
- # of children receiving Early ACCESS services vs. # of children should be served
- % of mothers with prenatal care in 1<sup>st</sup> trimester
- % of mothers with prenatal care in 1<sup>st</sup> trimester, by Race/Ethnicity

### **Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

- 1) Health Care & Screening: Family and Community Health Alliance
- 2) Parenting Classes: Parent Education Consortium
- 3) Family Support Workers: Family Violence Collaborative

- 4) Child Care Provider Training: Provider And Child Education Services
- 5) Full-day Full-year Child Development Program: Step-Up Preschool Wraparound
- 6) Full-day Full-year Child Development Program: Head Start Wraparound

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The Linn County Community Empowerment Area worked collaboratively to complete a 3-year community plan. The plan details seven priority areas that Linn Empowerment will focus its efforts on in the coming years:

- ◆ Child Care & Child Development
- ◆ Child Abuse & Neglect
- ◆ School Readiness
- ◆ Domestic Violence
- ◆ Homelessness
- ◆ Children with Special Needs
- ◆ Prenatal Care

An African proverb states “It takes a village to raise a child” and this concept can also be applied to the development of the Linn County Community Empowerment community plan. Community agencies and collaboratives were contacted in regard to the availability of community needs assessments and planning documents. These documents were used to inventory resources and to identify existing collaboratives.

Several community agencies were contacted in regard to data collection. Key partners included United Way of East Central Iowa, Linn County Public Health Department, Foresight 2020, Healthy Linn Care Network, Child Care Resource & Referral, local law enforcement, Linn Homeless Council, Department of Human Services, HACAP, Children at Risk Task Force and providers of Head Start, Step-Up and Shared Vision programs.

After an exhaustive review of data using the Mark Friedman model a large pool of local indicators was developed. Several focus groups were then convened to discuss the indicators. The groups helped select those indicators that would best “indicate” the well being of our community. One focus group consisted of representatives of Education, Health and Human Service organizations. A second group was comprised of parents that are consumers of early childhood services. A third focus group meeting was held with Linn County Community Empowerment Board of Directors.

Group discussions also focused on how the community could best respond to the seven priority areas. Comments from the groups assisted in the development of specific action steps in the community plan.

The end result is not just a planning document but a valued tool that assists the Board in focusing its efforts for maximum impact.

## **Madison County Empowerment Area**

### **Contact for Area:**

Patrick Frazier  
209 East Madison, Winterset, IA 50273  
Phone number: (515) 462-2931 ext. 206  
E-mail address: mccs@madisoncountyhelp.org  
Fax number: (515) 462-3076

### **Vision and Mission:**

The Vision and Mission of the Madison County Empowerment Board has not changed. What follows is an excerpt from the FY 2000 Annual Report:

The Madison County Empowerment Board, through collaboration with citizens, businesses, elected officials, volunteers, Health professionals, Human Services professionals, and Educators visualizes a community that is truly committed and takes responsibility for the well being of all families and all children. The overall goal of the Madison County Empowerment Board is to develop a comprehensive, seamless, delivery system that will enhance all parents' abilities to provide their children with the skills needed to succeed in school.

The basic goal is based on the following assumptions:

- All children need to have nurturing, caring, parents.
- Parents who have access to information, education and support can respond more positively and effectively to their children.
- Both emotional and physical needs of parents must be met if they are to respond positively to their children.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

In its original request for designation, the Madison County Empowerment Area had developed the following plan:

- Provide home visitation services to all Madison County residents who have a newborn child regardless of where that delivery takes place. This project will help to ensure that all children are healthy and that all families are secure and nurturing.
- Ensure that all Madison County parents with a child between those ages of birth and five have access to the Parents as Teachers Program or other parent education opportunities. This will help to ensure that all children are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in school and that all families are secure and nurturing.
- Increase the quality and affordability of childcare in Madison County. Increase the number of children attending preschool in Madison County. In addition, the Board will assist working families with transportation to and from preschool. This project will ensure that children of working parents have access to secure and nurturing childcare environments and have an opportunity to attend preschool.

### **Local Indicators:**

1. Increased number of families that accept a home visit.
2. Increased number of families who participate in the Parents as Teachers Program.
3. Increase positive family interactions.
4. Decrease child abuse and neglect.

5. Increased health status of Madison County children age 0-5.
6. Increased number of Madison County children with access to health insurance.
7. Decreased number of children who enter the school system with developmental delays.
8. Increase basic skill level of all children.
9. Increase parents' knowledge of normal child development.
10. Increased availability of affordable childcare and preschool options.
11. Increased preschool attendance.
12. Increased Child Care providers attending training.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The home visitation program in Madison County provided by Earlham Home Care provides an in home nurse visit to families with newborn children. Educational materials are provided that contain developmental, nutritional, health, and safety information for the parent for each stage of child development. A nursing assessment can help identify special needs, developmental delays, referral to appropriate services, and education to parents about management of pediatric medical conditions.

Parents as Teachers is a home-based early childhood/parent education program that focuses on teaching parents about normal child development, age appropriate expectations of children and effective forms of behavior management. Parent educators typically make monthly visits and distributes educational resources.

Madison County Public Transportation provides transportation of children to preschool and daycare. This alleviates the need for working parents to take time from work to transport the child during the day.

CRISP, (Community Resources in Service to People), is an information and referral service located in the Winterset elementary school. Many households CRISP serves has children aged 0 to 5.

Childcare Resource and Referral provides training for childcare providers and consultation services for home-based child care providers. Services include training workshops, assistance to individuals seeking to become a registered day care provider, and information and referral for parents seeking childcare.

Crisis Care was a collaborative effort with DeCat that provided emergency childcare for up to 72 hours. Crisis Care has been used by law enforcement, DHS workers, and also available for families by request when appropriate.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The year ended June 30, 2002 was one of great change. DHS was restructured and a key representative on the Empowerment Board was lost, County funding for staffing the Community Services Office was reduced by 40%, the DeCat Coordinator resigned, and consequently administrative support for the Madison County Empowerment Area has been dramatically reduced.

# Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Area

## Counties Served:

Mahaska-Wapello

## Contact Person:

Beth Mohrfeld  
2127 Avenue H  
Fort Madison, Iowa 52627  
319.376.4331  
bethmohr@interl.net

## Vision Statement:

All families living within the Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Area have an opportunity to live in a safe, stable, healthy and nurturing environment.

## Mission:

Our mission is to enhance community recognition in that the parent is the child's first and best teacher and therefore establish an ongoing program to assist parents in stimulating the development of their children. The Empowerment Committees elected to develop programming, which combines prevention, support and education into a comprehensive continuum of services available to expectant parents and parents regardless of family income.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Community Plan for the Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Area was developed based on a number of local and state needs assessment tools and community input. Data and feedback collected helped to identify gaps in services relevant to School Readiness and Early Childhood needs. The Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Area then elected to develop programming which combined prevention, support and education into a comprehensive continuum of services available to both pre-parents and parents regardless of family income. As a result, the national *Parents as Teachers Program* was chosen to address the state expected result of Children Ready to Succeed in School.

Early Childhood funds are utilized in the two -county area to strengthen and expand the current childcare system to support the needs of families with children 0-5 years of age based on two surveys completed in 1998. The *Industrial Alliance Survey* and the *Child Health Specialty Clinics & Healthy Childcare Iowa Survey* initially identified where specifically the needs for services were in the two -county area concerning childcare. The Early Childhood sub-committee again reviewed the needs of the area in the summer of 1999 to determine the appropriateness of its earlier analysis. Based on these results, Childcare Resource & Referral provides extensive outreach to identify new providers and offers a variety of additional services to existing home and center childcare providers. Grant funds for equipment, training's and focused promotion and support towards quality and affordable childcare are just a few of the focuses of this funding.

## Local Indicators:

### Early Childhood Environment

- & The number of licensed/registered/non-registered providers participating in training will be maintained or increase by 10% in Fiscal Year 2002 from the 2001 levels.
- & 30 infant childcare slot subsidies will be provided to expand infant care during the 2002 Fiscal Year
- & 15 childcare providers will receive on-site technical assistance to improve the quality of the provider's daycare program in Fiscal Year 2002.

### School Readiness Environments

#### *Increase basic skill level of youth*

- & Children who participate in Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program will score 10% higher in language, problem solving, and social development than children not having been enrolled in PAT. This will be assessed by test date measurements as they enroll and are screened by other programs, such as AEA, Head Start and local Educational Agencies by 2003.

### Health

#### *Increase the health status of children in Mahaska and Wapello counties and decrease the incidence of child abuse rates.*

- & Number of children immunized at age 2 in Fiscal Year 2002 will increase 5% from 1999 levels as a result of the education and reinforcement provided by the PAT program and the NEST program.
- & The number of founded child neglect and abuse cases in Fiscal Year 2002 will decline by 5% from 1999 statistics as a result of parent involvement in the PAT in-home program and school based component.
- & The percentage of births to teens in Fiscal Year 2002 will decrease 5% from 1999 levels due to the knowledge gained by participating in the school-based components of the PAT program.

### ***Parent Education & Support***

*Increased parental involvement with their children and encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children and increase the access of children and their families to an adult mentor.*

- & 100% of parents of births at local hospitals during Fiscal Year 2002 program will be furnished with information regarding accessing parenting/community resources before leaving the hospital.
- & 110 families will enroll in the PAT program and 95 families will complete the first program year of PAT by June 30, 2002
- & To assure that families enrolled in the PAT Program access other appropriate community services, 300 referrals on behalf of the families will be made in the third full year of implementation

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Area Parents as Teachers (PAT) program promotes early childhood parent education and provides family support utilizing the nationally acclaimed PAT curriculum. Programming is designed to empower parents to give their children the best possible start in life through educating parents about child development and parenting practices while monitoring the child's development. Services are done through home visits and group meetings. Extensive training empowers parent educators with the knowledge and resources needed in order to provide child development and parenting information to parents of children 0-5, as well as monitor the child's development. Parent Educators are able to comprehensively assess the family's health, education and social service needs, develop appropriate interventions and provide educational material and support related to these specific areas of need. PAT is a preventative program anticipating problems before they occur and offers education to prevent at-risk behaviors. PAT is a community based program that enables numerous professionals to bring their expertise to the family. Referrals come from all segments of the community. Families in the program are also referred to other appropriate services available when necessary.

The Mahaska-Wapello Empowerment Board works intricately with the area Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R) to provide extensive outreach to identify possible childcare providers and offer additional services to existing home and center childcare providers in the area. The overall goal for the Childcare Project is to strengthen and expand the current childcare system to support the needs of families with children 0-5 while enhancing the quality of care for children. Support services offered to childcare providers in Mahaska-Wapello counties include: promoting registering and licensing of homes or centers; linking childcare providers with the Child & Adult Care Food Program; provider training and continued education; training's to become certified in CPR and First Aide; and the availability of grant funds in order to purchase equipment for childcare homes or centers.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes :**

Success in programming funded by the Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area can be seen by what data collected reflects. Overall childcare enhancement has significantly increased by the number of individuals providing childcare in the two-county area, the number of childcare providers participating in trainings, and the support to new providers in getting established to ensure quality care from the beginning. Having both a Childcare Consultant and Childcare Health Consultant available has enabled childcare providers and families to have access to much needed resources and information in a timely manner to continue the commitment to early childhood education. Since Mahaska & Wapello Counties were designated an Empowerment Area, participation in childcare enhancement efforts have doubled in all indicators tracked. This not only shows a commitment by those providing the service, but also by the community for expecting the best out of those who care for our children.

Data also shows us that the Parents as Teachers program continues to make great strides in assisting children in becoming school ready. Though many different definitions and interpretation define school readiness, one thing is clear- *parents are our first and best teachers*. Assisting them in being the best teachers possible can only be done by building on their strengths and providing them with knowledge. This program has accomplished that by involving parents and equipping them with what they need to help ensure their children are healthy, cared for and reaching their potential. Tracking these indicators has been accomplished through a community partnership commitment to the well being of children. Developmental screenings ensure that those identified early as having possible delays receive immediate referral and services to address needs. Children and families are assured health coverage in order to establish a medical home to promotes wellness. Families are learning how to appropriately interact with their children to encourage strong family ties by making all resources in the area available to them to access at any point they need to do so. As a result, more and more families are being served by PAT and additional children are ready to start school with what they need in order to be successful for a lifetime of learning.

# Marion County Empowerment

## Contact for Area:

Kim Dorn  
Marion County Empowerment  
Community Health Services of Marion County  
Box 152  
Knoxville, IA 50138  
Phone: 641.828.2238  
Fax: 641-842-3442  
[kdorn@chmarion.org](mailto:kdorn@chmarion.org)  
[www.marioncountyempowerment.org](http://www.marioncountyempowerment.org)

## Vision and Mission:

The vision of the Marion County Empowerment Board is to enable the collaborative efforts of citizens and professionals of Marion County to develop and utilize all resources available to strengthen families and address the needs of parents and children.

The vision statement of the Marion County Empowerment Board is based on the following philosophy:

- We believe that all persons in Marion County deserve equal access to our shared community resources.
- We believe strengths exist in our own communities to define and address community problems, enhance present resources and to explore and cultivate new resources.
- We believe that resources are used most productively when needs are thoroughly and accurately assessed on an ongoing basis.
- We believe preventive measures and early intervention strategies are the most effective assistance to children and families.
- We believe that by working together as communities we can improve efficiency and reduce duplication of services.
- We believe that citizens should be encouraged to participate in all these efforts including the distribution and management of financial resources.

## Overview of Community Plan:

1. The Marion County Empowerment Area will use asset building as the foundation for achieving school readiness.
2. The community members in the Marion County Empowerment area will take responsibility for the positive development of children during their first years of life.
3. The Marion County Empowerment area will focus on providing appropriate services to all families.
4. Members in the Marion County Empowerment area will become more knowledgeable of the specific programs that are available throughout the county.
5. The Marion County Empowerment Board will continuously research new initiatives to provide the most appropriate services.
6. The Marion County Empowerment Board will continuously evaluate all programs and services to assure that all goals, objectives and outcomes are met.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

- Home visitation services were provided to Marion County residents who had a newborn child, and to participating families with children up to three years old. This project (Baby's Bright Beginning) helped to ensure that *children were healthy and that families were secure and nurturing.*

- Home visitation ensured that Marion County parents with a child(ren) between that ages of birth and three were screened early and received early access to assistance if found to be delayed in any way. The families also were familiarized with the 40 assets, and were referred to the Parents as Teachers Program as well as other parent education opportunities. This component of the plan helped to ensure that *children are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in school and that families are secure and nurturing.*
- The 40 Developmental Assets for Preschoolers was developed and implemented throughout Marion County. Eventually, this project can enable all *communities within Marion County to become more safe and supportive.*
- Increased quality and availability of childcare for Marion County families. This project will ensure that children of working parents have access to *secure and nurturing childcare environments.*

**Local Indicators:**

1. Early identification and intervention for potential developmental delays via Denver Developmental Screening Test
2. Increased number of families participating in home visiting program (BBB)
3. Increased number of children with access to health insurance.
4. Decrease number of children who enter school with developmental delays.
5. Increased basic skill level of children.
6. Increased parents knowledge of normal child development.
7. Increased family awareness of existing community resources.
8. Increased quality of available child care.
9. Increased communication and collaboration between service providers.
10. Increased awareness of the 40 Developmental Assets.
11. Increased number of providers who are registered day care providers

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The Marion County Home Visitation program has allowed for the development of a central point of entry for new born babies in the county. This allows for close collaboration with other programs such as Parents as Teachers, WIC, MCH, the Nest program, the AEA, and others. This has also built a working relationship between each of the hospitals and the local public health agency and the community, resulting in other, Empowerment-related and non-Empowerment related partnerships. The Board continues to review community needs, as well. This review, along with budget cuts, resulted in a shifting of carry over money for FY 02 to include preschool tuition assistance for disadvantaged children and mini grants for technology for preschools. Through the local Empowerment system, 669 Denver Developmental Screens were completed on babies and toddlers. Twenty two (22) of those children were identified as appropriate for referral due to potential developmental delays through the Baby’s Bright Beginnings (BBB) piece of the Empowerment program. All of those children have been referred for early access services. A total of 1,043 visits were made in the home visiting program. The total number of children served in the home visiting program was 928 children. Three hundred fifty three (353) families indicated interest in Parents as Teachers at Baby’s Bright Beginnings visits, and referrals were made for each family. Parents as Teachers served 147 families during FY02. Sixty one percent (61%) of the PAT participants were dually enrolled in PAT and BBB. Thirty-eight of the families served were linked to additional community resources during the program year. Through efforts of the CRRR, there has been an increase in the capacity of child care in the county, an increase in the knowledge and professionalism of child care providers, and a support system has been established for those providers. The 40 Assets project has given life to the community’s vision of developing assets and character development.

# Marshall County Empowerment Area

## Contact for Area:

Fran Harvey 3405 S. Center St. PO Box 497 Marshalltown, IA 50158 641-754-1400 X 31 641-752-6265  
[fh Harvey@iavalley.cc.ia.us](mailto:fh Harvey@iavalley.cc.ia.us) [www.youthandviolence.org](http://www.youthandviolence.org)

## Vision and Mission:

To empower our citizens with the resources to raise happy, healthy and successful children

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Marshall County Comprehensive Community Plan and its revision is the community plan, which is being utilized for the planning, and implementation of programs for Juvenile Justice, Empowerment and Decategorization initiatives in Marshall County. The 2000 revision has been expanded to include services for children 0-5 and their families. (Please reference the Marshall County Comprehensive Community Plan, May, 2001 pages 25-34 recommendations 1, 3, 18, 26-29, 30-37.)

## Local Indicators:

Rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect # of out of home placements # of domestic violence cases reported # and % of teen births # and % low birth weight births # and % of women giving birth who : # accessed prenatal care during the 1st trimester # and % of families participating in network/care management # and % of families participating in home visitation program # of licensed child care slots # of preschool slots # & % of children entering kindergarten with a quality preschool experience % of population using libraries % of children entering kindergarten demonstrating literacy skills # of low income families in registered and licensed care # of providers recruited # of additional providers registered, licensed and Child Net certified # of providers enrolled in CACFP # of providers attending training's # of parents who receive CCRR services # of children accessing transportation services

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

- 2 Building Healthy Families, collaborative home visitation to parents of newborns
- 2 Child Care Resource and Referral Services: Lending library for providers - Training opportunities for providers - Incentives for providers Aid in licensing and registration of providers and Scholarships to low-income families
- 2 Preschool/Wrap Around Child Care Center \*Early ACCESS Transportation Services

## “Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes:

### Building Healthy Families:

Building Healthy Families is a community-based, collaborative home visitation program that is designed to provide culturally competent support services, education and linkages to health care to all parents of newborns who reside in Marshall County, Iowa. It is available in an effort to provide comprehensive primary prevention and early intervention services that will:

1. Increase school readiness through early intervention and identification of developmental delays
2. Promote healthy child development by creating safe, stable and nurturing home environments
3. Prevent child abuse and neglect by: reducing the risks of poor family management, enhancing the protective factor of parent child bonding, providing information, referral and other support services, providing parent education, and promoting healthy development by linking to a medical provider. All Marshall County residents who give birth at Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center or at another area hospital are potential recipients of the Building Healthy Families program services. During the period of July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002, 432 children were born to residents of Marshall County. Four hundred seventy-nine (479) prenatal risk assessments were completed during this time period.

Two hundred sixty-nine (269) families received a home visit from a public health nurse who provided health care services and education within 72 hours after the mother and child returned home. Another 24 families received a home visit from the nurse somewhat later than 72 hours after their return home from the hospital.

Two weeks following the baby's birth, 264 families accepted a home visit (Phase I) that was offered by a Family Support Worker. At that time, mothers (and fathers, if present) were offered ongoing services and support. Two hundred seventeen (217) families are receiving on-going services.

Of the 217 families who elected to receive services after the initial home visit:

- 2 35 families were low risk
- 2 23 families were moderate risk
- 2 159 families were high risk

Of the 92 families that declined further services 41% were low-risk, 26% were moderate risk and 33% were high risk.

On-going home visitation services produced the following outcomes:

- 2 1420 goals were written by the families with 1277 or 90% of the goals were achieved
- 2 75% of families served showed a decrease in the seven identified risk factors or did not increase risks
- 2 58% of families increased their knowledge of parenting skills as measured by a pre/post test and 5% maintained a perfect score
- 2 1131 service referrals were made to community based services by Family Support Workers and another 224 were made by nurses during home visits
- 2 100 children were provided with lead care coordination services following a positive test for elevated blood lead levels

Preschool/Wrap Around Child Care Program:

The partnership with the First Friends Church, in Marshalltown, has been central to the success of the full day program that provides preschool services and child care to 16 preschool age children who come from low-income families. Marshall County Empowerment Area funds support this full day program. Low-income families have access to quality preschool education and childcare at no cost. Empowerment money makes it possible to support the efforts of parents working their way toward economic self-sufficiency. Collaborative efforts include a contract with Center Associates, in Marshalltown, for mental health services to Head Start children and families. Additionally, MICA has an agreement with Area Education Agency (AEA) 6 to provide developmental assessments for the children. The Head Start program also coordinates Head Start services with MICA's health and nutrition programs.

CCCR&R:

Iowa State University Extension partnered with CCR&R to implement the Better Kid Care training series and the Feeding Young Children training series. These training's were held at the Extension office utilizing their satellite equipment. IVCE made space available for trainings and child care trainings at no charge to the program.

Child Care Assistance Program –

For low – income families between 141% - 185% of poverty who are working or attending school 30 hours or more a week are eligible if they have a provider who is registered and enrolled wit CCR. 35 children were assisted with these funds as well as children in the Teen Parent ChildCare Center. (See Attached)

Caregiver Training –

125 Marshall County Child Care Providers attended 693 live hours of training this year. Training topics included: CPR/First Aid, Child Development, Guidance, Nutrition, Playground Safety, Marketing and many other topics have been covered this year. (Attached training flyers)

Home Consulting Services –

Were offered for 2 months in Marshall County with funds from CCRR of Central Iowa. The Home Consultant met with 16 new providers who were interested in becoming registered. This project allowed for someone to visit providers and go over registration guidelines and assist providers in their journey to provide quality childcare.

Provider Recruitment –

41 new providers enrolled with ChildCare Resource & Referral this year.

Parent Referrals –

150 parents received referrals to child care providers, through parent services.

ChildNet Certification –

Five child care providers received ChildNet Certification giving Marshall County a total of 10 ChildNet Certified providers. Receiving twenty – five hours of interactive, applicable and supportive professional education allows providers to develop knowledge of and appreciation for best practices relevant to early childhood care, education, and small business practice. The overall goal of the series is for child care providers to become ChildNet certified by passing an in– home evaluation, registering with the state, and participating in the Child and Adult Food Program.

NACCRRRA Ware –

The successful addition to the CCRR system allows staff to access web based reporting and data collection program to ensure up to date records and the ability to process referrals electronically.

So Many Rewards –

14 child care providers earned \$3,720.00 towards gift certificates to Lakeshore and Environments learning materials companies. Providers earned points toward gift certificates by becoming state registered, joining the food program; training hours, and implementing best practices in their child care program.

## MUSCATINE EMPOWERMENT AREA (MEA)

### Counties in Area:

The Muscatine Empowerment Area encompasses Muscatine County as well as a portion of Louisa and Cedar. The school districts included in the MEA are Muscatine, Wilton, West Liberty, Louisa-Muscatine and Durant.

### Contact for Area:

Mary L. Wildermuth , Empowerment Project Facilitator  
Muscatine Community School District • 2705 Cedar Street • Muscatine, IA 52761  
Phone: (563) 263 – 6141 ext. 1167 • FAX: (563) 264-1794 • E-MAIL: [mlwilder@muscatine.k12.ia.us](mailto:mlwilder@muscatine.k12.ia.us)

### Vision:

We believe the community is accountable for supporting families so children have opportunities to live their lives to the fullest and that parents are the most important and effective resource for children. It is our mission to ensure parents have the necessary tools and resources to raise their children to be happy, productive adults.

### Overview of Community Plan:

The Muscatine Empowerment Area works to improve the lives of families with children between the ages of 0 - 5. The focus for the Muscatine Empowerment Board is health, the young child's environment, and parenting education. With support from the Muscatine County Decategorization Governance Board, the board provides the leadership and support required to implement an assessment, planning and service delivery system that exceeds the outcome of current efforts. The Board works with community resources that directly and tangentially serve young children and their families to develop a unified understanding and unified commitment to participate in strategies proven to improve the young child's health, environment and parental guidance.

Through this work, data regarding service gaps and uneven distribution of resources is continually brought forward through an established reporting and evaluation process. The Board, working with collaborating organizations, uses this information as a planning base to continue to lead toward a comprehensive service delivery system.

### Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

The Muscatine Empowerment Area uses **Early Childhood** funding to address the additional need for quality, childcare services in the county. These are the programs supported by empowerment:

- **SOS Childcare program** - provides free childcare services to parents under the age of 21 who are in school or returning to school to obtain their GED or get their high school diploma.
- **Childcare Mentor** - works directly one-on-one with childcare providers as they work through the DHS registration process. The mentor also supports current and potential childcare providers, encouraging registration and offering technical assistance.
- **Childcare Assistance** - provides full or part-time childcare assistance for income eligible Muscatine Empowerment Area families working and/or attending school.

### School Ready

- **HOPES program** - Intensive, voluntary year-round in-home visitation program offering services to families considered at-risk and their children.
- **FNP program** - Less intensive voluntary program that provides information and home visits to families in an attempt to ease the transition of bringing a new baby into the home.
- **Bavolek Nurturing program** - in-home service with emphasis on child development, behavior management activities and parenting skills development.
- **PEL program** - provides in-home services based on adult/child literacy activities, infant/toddler development and methods of learning.

## Local Indicators:

| Indicators   | Desired Outcome |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>Healthy Children</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible families receive Medicaid/Hawk I information; Families receive info on child health services/ immunizations; and Children's immunizations are up to date.</li> </ul>   | 100%            |
| <b>Children Ready to Succeed in School</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents will interact with their children using emergent literacy techniques.</li> </ul>   | 85%             |
| <b>Safe and Supportive Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic violence rates of families receiving in-home services will have at least 20% less than the county rate.</li> </ul>  | 0%              |
| <b>Secure and Nurturing Families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families attend at least 1 educational offering during 12-month period.</li> </ul>   | 100%            |
| <b>Secure and Nurturing Childcare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program staff attends at least 1 in-service; Families assessed for safety within first 2 visits and upon completion of services; Families surveyed for safety will show improvement by completion of services.</li> </ul> | 100%            |

## "Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:

### ➤ **Childcare Mentor**

- 70 new registered providers added.
- Child Care Association formed. Members attended ChildNet training series and the 4-week Read, Write and Talk with me literacy training.
- 164 home visits made.

### ➤ **Childcare and Preschool Assistance Program**

- Public awareness: program marketed through an ad in the Muscatine County Fair tabloid, notice to all providers in the empowerment area and staff participation in agency meetings and local family events and 2 newspaper articles written that specifically address these two programs.
- 125 children served: 54 received preschool assistance and 71 received full/part time childcare assistance.

### ➤ **HOPES/FNP programs**

#### *HOPES*

- Served 89 families in FY2002, 173 in total since November of 1996. 88 referrals from other agencies were received.
- 100% received Medicaid/Hawk I, child health services and immunizations info; 90% are enrolled and receive Medicaid assistance; and 98% percent up to date on their immunizations.
- 65% of families' report having read to their child and 96% of homes have age appropriate toys and are available to the child.

#### *FNP*

- 500 families served: 244 in-home visits, 256 packet drop-offs and 104 packets mailed.
- 100% received on Medicaid/Hawk I, child health services and immunizations info; 100% of the families visited were screened for risk factors using the HOPES screening record.

### ➤ **Bavolek Nurturing Program**

- Served 93 families, since inception; (43 this year); 100% of children were up to date on their immunizations; 100% of participants received the recommended primary care services at appropriate intervals as per the American Academy of Pediatrics.

### ➤ **PEL**

- 44 children participating; 324 home visits
- Expanded existing services beyond the city of Muscatine and included summer time activities; 100% are up to date on their immunizations and receive health benefits of some kind.

The major accomplishment for the Muscatine Empowerment Area was the collaborative effort to develop and implement a Universal Screening process at Unity Hospital for all births. All babies born in Muscatine are screened by a social worker at Unity Public Health. The highest risk screens are forwarded to HOPES. The Unity Nurturing Program is offered to families at risk, especially if there are in the Unity System. A public health home visit by a nurse is also offered. Those that are not screened at risk or moderate risk, are referred to the Friends of New Parents program.

# Polk County Community Empowerment

## Setting the Stage for a Lifetime of Learning and Success

### Contacts for Polk County Empowerment Area:

Kate Bennett, Empowerment Coordinator  
Human Services Planning Alliance  
1111 Ninth Street, Suite 100  
Des Moines, IA 50314

(515) 246-6612 FAX (515) 246-6546  
email: [kbennett.hspa@unitedwaydm.org](mailto:kbennett.hspa@unitedwaydm.org)  
website: <http://www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org>

### Vision:

Setting the stage for a lifetime of learning and success.

### Mission:

- To ensure positive outcomes for all children in Polk County and strengthen families, by involving all stakeholders (i.e. Individuals, families, all levels of government, schools, community agencies, businesses, faith community).
- The Partnership will support the Early Childhood Business plan for community investments that will achieve long term positive results for children, families & neighborhoods.
- The partnership will engage the Human Services Planning Alliance to challenge all stakeholders to own the issues of the early childhood business plan to take action.

### Overview of Community Plan:

1. Increase high quality preschool capacity and increase utilization by at-risk children.
2. Coordinate and streamline access to an expanded network of family support, parent education programs and health services.
3. Increase access to primary and preventive health care for at-risk women, children, and families.
4. Ensure the availability and streamline accessibility to high quality child care for low-income & subsidized children.

### Local Indicators:

- Low birth weight rate
- Teen birth rate
- Founded child abuse rate
- Percent of children with age-appropriate immunizations
- Proportion of high-risk children demonstrating age-appropriate development and school readiness when entering kindergarten
- Number of NAEYC certified child care centers
- Number of children entering school with hearing and speech delays
- Number / capacity of high-quality preschool education programs for high-risk children
- Number of high-risk children enrolled in high quality preschool programs
- Proportion of subsidized children in regulated child care settings

### Service Showcase and Collaborative Efforts:

#### *Increase high quality preschool capacity and increase utilization by at-risk children.*

A strong collaborative has been formed among the 9 Polk County school districts and Drake Head Start to create standard measures for school readiness, share resources, insure quality of programming, and a commitment to keeping the funding with each child regardless of school district, as long as the child resides in Polk County.

- (a) Expansion of comprehensive preschool and Head Start sites in under-served areas of Polk County.
  - The Des Moines Public School maintained two new preschool sites (opened in 1999) on the South side utilizing the Shared Vision criteria and provided slots for children in their fee based preschools.
  - Head Start maintained a classroom at Mitchellville Elem. in the Southeast Polk School District.
- (b) Preschool financial assistance (scholarships) for currently not served, at-risk children residing outside of the Des Moines Public School District.
  - 125+ at-risk children, ages 3-5, received scholarships or attend a new "in-house" preschool in their school district. Saydel, Ankeny, & Johnston, maintained their own preschools and provide free tuition for qualified families. The other 5 school districts outside of Des Moines have scholarships available to distribute to families (eligible for free/reduced lunch program) within their districts.
  - Some preschool programs have incorporated summer programming to serve eligible children with opportunities for a jumpstart towards kindergarten readiness
  - Home Literacy Liaisons / Family Advocates: Four newly created positions were shared among the 9 school districts in a collaborative effort to ensure parent support and involvement in their children's education. Liaisons made home visits, conducted parent workshops, and ensured smooth communications between the school district, parents, children, and the preschool program. And linked families to other Empowerment programs and resources in the community.
- (c) Wrap-around preschool/child care services for at risk children in part-day preschool programs.

***Coordinate and streamline access to an expanded network of family support, parent education programs and health services.***

- (a) Established a coordinated assessment and referral system to identify and link families in need of family support services (e.g., home visiting, case management, and parent education) to the most appropriate service provider in the community.
  - The Healthy Start Model for centralized intake and referral, designed for children 0-1 in six high-risk census tracts of the County, has been expanded to serve children birth - 5 years old in all of Polk County.
  - Fourteen case management programs/agencies as part of this Family Support Network agreed upon a uniform standard of care, protocol, common intake form, performance measures, 36 continuums of services & common case-management definitions.
- (b) Expansion of current family support services to identify and serve more high-risk families with children birth – 5 years old.
  - Bi-lingual case managers are being hired in two community based family support programs (Family Enrichment Center and Hispanic Educational Resources) that serve Polk County’s growing Latino population.
- (c) Expansion of current family support services to identify and serve more high-risk families with children birth – 5 years old.
  - Families being served through the Family Support Network are eligible to receive additional emergency and material assistance (up to \$500) Empowerment funds administered by Polk County General Assistance.
- (d) Encouraged participation in and completion of voluntary parent education programs among low-income parents with children.
  - Utilized an incentives program established by Visiting Nurse Services to provide parents the ability to earn points for attendance of classes. The points were then exchanged for merchandise at a store located at VNS. Items purchased through the parent incentives program included: clothing, safety equipment, car seats, books & toys, bedding, medical supplies, travel items, diapers, furniture, hygiene products and baby accessories. Empowerment dollars supplied the funds for purchasing the incentive merchandise. Approximately 637 clients were served.
  - Child Care Resource and Referral Center maintained the Parenting Monthly website. This website provided information to parents, case managers, agencies, and the general population about up-coming parenting classes.
- (e) Established a continuum of respite care services for high-risk families with children 0-5, which is linked to the Family Support Network.
  - The respite continuum is comprised of three community-based agencies, each of which offers unique planned and or emergency respite care services.
  - These services include State registered child care homes, licensed foster parent homes, a crisis nursery program, and a licensed shelter program.
- (f) Increased utilization of primary and preventive health care for young children and high-risk pregnant women.
  - A joint outreach program between Healthy Polk 2010, the Polk County Health Department, and Empowerment provided mini grants to serve at risk populations in the area of health care prevention.
  - Maternal and child health services are expanding at four community-based health clinics (S.E. Polk, Saydel, Ankeny, and La Esperanza Clinica) where needs are increasing.
  - Family planning services were expanded through three main family planning providers (Broadlawns, Planned Parenthood, and La Esperanza Clinica) for low-income women.
  - Continued efforts to expand the use of HAWK-I, as a low-cost insurance provider for at risk families

***Ensure the availability of and streamline accessibility to high quality childcare for low-income, subsidized children.***

- (a) Streamlined accessibility for parents eligible for subsidized childcare. Polk County established a centralized intake process that allows for the coordination of childcare funds from government, empowerment grant, and United Way.
- (b) When the State instituted a waiting list, qualified children attending targeted childcare centers were subsidized and parents paid a co-pay of 10% of their gross monthly income.
- (c) Stabilization of 7 inner city childcare centers (Targeted Childcare Centers) by paying the gap between the market price for center-based care and the State (DHS) reimbursement rate. Stabilization funds are being used by the targeted centers to help maintain their current capacity and increase their enrollment.
- (d) Support for NAEYC Accreditation & CDA training for 7 inner city childcare centers (Targeted Childcare Centers). Childcare quality improvement plans have been developed at each center. Funds will be used for NAEYC Accreditation expenses, staff tuition for higher education, CDA scholarships & substitute teachers. United Way of Central Iowa Early Childhood Initiative, Bank of America, Safe and Stable Schools, and Polk County matched Empowerment funds to support this initiative.
- (e) Business support to the 7 inner city centers (Targeted Childcare Centers) to increase their administrative efficiencies. Computer hardware, software and technical assistance are being provided to assist centers in their record keeping and reporting procedures. United Way of Central Iowa Early Childhood Initiative and Prairie Meadows matched Empowerment funds to provide this initiative.
- (f) Increase the number of certified and accredited family day care homes particularly infant care and shift care. The Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Iowa is recruiting, training, and offering incentives to providers to expand quality day care homes.

# Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area

Serving Pottawattamie County

## Contact for Area:

Patricia Russmann  
417 East Kaneshville Blvd.  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503  
712-328-4855  
fax: 712-328-5748  
prussma@dhs.state.ia.us

## Vision:

The vision of the Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area is to collaborate with key partners to maximize resources in providing programs, services, and supports that lead to accessible child development opportunities supported by strong families who will nurture children ages 0-5 who are physically, socially, and intellectually ready to learn.

Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area has three identified priority areas:

**Priority 1** – Provide parent education, health services, and support for all children ages 0-5.

- Increased positive parent/child interactions
- Increased social support
- Increased community family involvement
- Decreased child abuse
- Improve child health

Pottawattamie Empowerment has developed a collaborative project with Loess Hills AEA 13, Lutheran Social Services of Iowa, ISU Extension and Visiting Nursing Association to provide a comprehensive home visitation service for children birth to five. The program served 435 families and 609 children during this year. Newborn visits included 329 babies. Program families showed a 62% increase of parent/child interaction. Unfortunately the program received funding cuts from Decat and Shared Visions previously used as matching funds to this program.

**Priority 2** – Provide access to quality, comprehensive and affordable early childhood programs (including child care) for ages 0-5.

- Increase number of available preschool slots
- Increased social, intellectual & physical skills
- Increased access to community support
- Increased positive parent to school relationships increased quality of programs resulting in school ready child “graduates”

The Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area Board has partnered with the eight public school districts in our county to provide preschool programming. Seven of the districts have expanded their preschool programs to serve more students. Empowerment has funded 96 preschool slots. All funded programs received High/Scope and Search Institute Asset Building curriculum and resources through technical assistance dollars.

**Priority 3** – Provide access to quality and affordable child care for children ages 0-5.

Increased skills and knowledge to support child development

Increased positive parent to school relationships

Increased quality of programs resulting in school-ready child “graduates”

The Empowerment Board has contracted with West Central Development Corporation Child Care Resource and Referral to address the availability and quality of childcare. A child development specialist provides child development information to child care providers in homes and centers to increase quality child care. The Specialist uses the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale as a quality measurement. High/Scope and ChildNet training series has also been implemented for providers in the county. Empowerment has exceeded the goal of increasing the number of available registered home provider slots and number of slots serving 0-2.

## **Poweshiek County Empowerment Area**

### **Contact for Area:**

Karen Fread, Board Secretary, 210 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Grinnell, IA 50112

### **Vision Statement:**

All families living within Poweshiek County will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment.

### **Mission Statement:**

Assure that families with young children have access to affordable high quality `childcare, early intellectual stimulation for children, be free of child abuse and neglect and have the skills and services needed to be healthy and strong.

### **Overview of Community Plan:**

The priorities established for the initial efforts of the community and the Poweshiek County Empowerment Area Board of Directors are

- Adequate comprehensive family support programs to meet the identified need
- Adequate numbers of well-prepared registered family home child care providers and licensed child care centers to meet the identified need
- Adequate numbers of accessible, available, affordable child care slots to meet the identified need

The Empowerment Area has decided to focus on family support and education, quality childcare providers and affordable child care at this time. The primary focus with the school ready funding will be family support and education. However some of the funding will be utilized to support the childcare home consultant and mini-grants that assist families with income between 140-200 percent of the federal poverty level with childcare. Early Childhood funding supports a childcare home consultant and assistance with childcare.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

Early Childhood funds have been utilized to support a Child Care Home Consultant, provider grants for equipment; child care subsidy for families; new provider safety packages,

School Ready Funds were utilized to establish a home visiting program for high-risk families – “Family Connections”, funding for licensed centers to assist families on a sliding scale. Additional funds have been used for a reading program for preschoolers at the library, education and support for pregnant women and new mothers through the Stork’s Nest Program which was initiated in fiscal year 2002.

### **Local Indicators:**

#### Early Childhood Environments

#### **Increase basic skill level of providers and increase quality and accessibility of childcare.**

Goal 1: To increase by 10 the numbers of registered child care providers between 6/30/99 and 6/30/01.

Goal 2: To increase by 10 percent the number of childcare providers participating in training by 25 % by 6/30/02.

Goal 3: To increase by 60 the number of available child care slots in licensed or registered child care settings by June 30, 2001

### Health Care for Children

Improve the health status and early stimulation of children; and increase the education and support given to families to impact the health and well being of children

Goal 1: To increase the number of children tested for lead poisoning by four percent per year until we exceed the state average

Goal 2: To increase by five percent the number of home visits provided to new parents in Poweshiek County by June 30, 2001

### Home Visiting, Parent Education and Support:

Increase access to a comprehensive family support system for children-at-risk and their families.

Goal: To increase by 10 the number of children-at-risk and their families who have access to comprehensive home visiting and family support services by June 30, 2001.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Family Connections is a cooperative effort between Grinnell Regional Medical Center Obstetrics Department, Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. and Grinnell Mother-Child Wellness Program. The partners meet monthly to identify potential referrals and to collaborate services for the families enrolled in Family Connections. This collaborative has identified 28 families in FY02 who are participating in Family Connections, a home visiting program for high risk families. A family development specialist visits the families 2-3 times a month or more often as needed to assist them in improving parenting skills and deal with family concerns.

Child Care Home Consultant: Through the Child Care Home Consultant and community members, we have been able to increase the number of childcare slots by 70 this fiscal year. The number of providers has been increased by 5. The number of providers enrolled with Child Care Resource and Referral increase from 63 to 68. The providers participating in training increased from 63 to 130, which greatly exceeded our goal of ten percent.

Also grants to providers and education opportunities for childcare providers have increased the quality of childcare provided by home providers.

Empowerment funding supported the Grinnell Community Day Care Center to continue the additional infant room that was greatly needed to meet community needs for infant care.

Twenty-five children received assistance with childcare at the day care center. Center staff also received some assistance with child care when they had an ill child so they could continue to work.

# Ringgold Empowerment Area

## Counties Served

Ringgold County and Clearfield, Diagonal and Mount Ayr Schools

## Contact for Area:

Judy Hensley, 101 N. Polk, Mount Ayr, IA 50854

Phone: 641-464-3333, Email: [judyh@iastate.edu](mailto:judyh@iastate.edu)

## Vision and Mission:

The vision of Ringgold Empowerment is to “Color a Brighter Future” by empowering families through education, involvement and connections to prepare children to be life long learners. Ringgold Empowerment’s mission is to focus the efforts of parents, schools, child care providers, community service providers, and citizens on the well-being of young children. Based on the premise that all families have strengths and parents are experts on their child, Ringgold Empowerment seeks to join families from all socioeconomic levels as one community.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The Ringgold Empowerment plan addresses three priority issues.

- Priority #1, Children ready to begin school: Supporting families' child rearing efforts is critically important for ensuring that more young children enter school ready to succeed.
- Priority #2, Stable and Supportive Families: Families must be supported in their efforts to be productive members of a caring community, manage challenge behavior both in and out of the home, and promote strong parent-child relationships.
- Priority #3, Quality Child Care: Quality family -based and center-based child care must build on the existing strengths of families and be responsive to their needs.

## Local Indicators:

Desired Result #1: Children ready to begin school

### *Indicators*

- Percentage of children in kindergarten with preschool experience
- Percentage of preschools with NAEYC Accreditation
- Percentage of students qualifying for special education

Desired Result #2: Healthy Children

### *Indicators*

- Rate of low birth-weight babies
- Rate of immunizations appropriate for age 2
- Rate of children receiving developmental screenings
- Health service availability
- Rate of home visits
- Percentage of children screened for lead poisoning prior to age 6

Desired Result #3: Quality Child Care

### *Indicators*

- Rate of child care slots available
- Rate of participation in training

Desired Result #4: Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

### *Indicators*

- Numbers of Child Abuse Prevention trainings
- Number of presentations by child advocate
- Number of children and families involved in domestic abuse

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Within each priority area, specific desired results were identified and addressed. (These are shown in the table above.) The services used to reach the desired results are:

- Incentives for child care provider training and safety education to enhance quality child care capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment
- Preschool services

- Child care services
- Parent education and support services that include home visitation
- Family advocacy

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

Five years of data will be more meaningful and allow for analysis of cause and effect as well as accountability. Progress, however, has been immediate. With so many children and families without basic services such as preschool or parent education and support, implementation of the services designed to meet the needs immediately changed families from “have nots” to “haves.” The *highlights* of Ringgold Empowerment Results are included below.

**Before** Ringgold Empowerment’s School Ready services were implemented, children living in the Mount Ayr school district could only go to preschool if they qualified for Head Start or the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Preschool. **Today** 41 children are enrolled in the Family Resource Center Preschool in Mount Ayr—this does not include the 20 children attending Head Start or the 8 children attending the ECSE Preschool.

The two preschools in the Clearfield and Diagonal school districts continue to be accredited by NAEYC. Empowerment resources have helped ensure **continuity and longevity of quality early childhood classrooms**. Teacher performance has been rewarded with appropriate salary increases.

The affordability and access to quality preschool has **reversed the trend of younger and younger students enrolling in Kindergarten**. The number of children *just meeting the age requirement for kindergarten* (five years old by September 15) had increased from 6% in 1997 to 27% in 1999. In 2002, only 13% of children enrolled in kindergarten were born between April and September. The elementary schools also report an increased percentage of students entering Kindergarten at the age of 6 years.

Parents at all income levels now have the option of affordable, quality preschool and are taking advantage of this opportunity to ensure their children are ready for school. In 2002, **92% of students entering Kindergarten have attended preschool**.

Collaboration with public schools to improve the transition of children and families as they enter kindergarten and to enhance continuity between early childhood and school programs is also important to the preschools. Formal agreements for sharing information about children and promoting the involvement of parents in kindergarten programs are a part of each preschool. Whenever possible, the preschool and other early childhood educators such as Head Start and Special Education Preschool staff **collaborate in joint staff development activities**. Last year every preschool and child care center in Ringgold Empowerment Area participated in the “Every Child Reads” program. This year every preschool teacher in the Ringgold Empowerment Area attended the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) training and will use it in the classroom.

The Parents As Teachers program is a **free, early childhood family education and support program** serving children prenatally and extending to age five. The voluntary primary prevention program offered 1) Monthly personalized home visits, 2) Group meetings, 3) Screening services for early identification and intervention, and 4) Network of families linked with service available and where resources are located. Coordinated through Ringgold Public Health, PAT’s efforts have helped in reaching the current **91.4% immunization rate of children 2 years old**. Seventy-eight children under the age of 6 were screened for lead poisoning.

The family advocate service, *Parenting Hand in Hand*, (PHIH) is under the direction of, and housed at, the Ringgold County Extension Service. The purpose of the PHIH service is to provide at-risk families and other residents with information, support and skills they need to raise healthy, productive citizens and promote a healthy community in which all residents thrive. PHIH also coordinates services funded through TANF. This year 18 trainings were provided for child care providers and **234 children** benefited directly from **PHIH delivered programs**.

Serving as fiscal agent and coordinating Ringgold Empowerment Area activities is the Ringgold County Extension Services. Extension utilized Technical Assistance funds to provide expertise and training for the local board. It also attained t-shirts, pins, logo for area, marketing brochure and pencils. These items helped the Ringgold Empowerment Board to **inform families and the public of the importance of Empowerment to the community**.

Clearly, Ringgold Empowerment as impacted the priorities of the area. School readiness, stable and supportive families and quality child care have improved as a result of the programs and services funded through Empowerment.



**Contact for Area:**

Priscilla Smith  
428 Western Ave.  
Davenport, Iowa 52801  
Phone 319-326-8221  
Email [psmith@scottcountyiowa.com](mailto:psmith@scottcountyiowa.com)  
Fax 563-328-3224

**Vision:**

The vision of the Scott County Empowerment Area is coordination and expansion of resources and services in the community to build environments for young children that enable them to be physically healthy, intellectually curious, emotionally sound and socially competent. Led by citizens, this system of public and private entities provides a continuum of seamless services targeted at helping all children reach their full potential.

**Overview of the Community Plan and Summary of Services:**

The School Ready plan for Scott County is called Steps to Success. The planning process began in 1998 when ideal situations were identified and then evaluated against current conditions in our community. The resulting gaps were the target of much of our initial service plan. Update planning sessions including open forums to directly address the Empowerment Board have resulted in an annual plan to direct the Empowerment process. Services to reach our core indicators can be classified into four basic categories:

|                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Health                       | Parent Education and Support |
| Early Childhood Environments | Public Awareness             |

In the area of Health, our largest effort is the identification of needs at the earliest possible time. Every family giving birth in Scott County hospitals since June 1999 has been visited by a medical social worker and helped to determine what level of support, if any, is needed to provide the best environment for their new baby. Various programs funded by Empowerment and others provide a continuum of care so that the varying needs of families can be addressed.

Parent Education and Support Services include Parents as Teachers programs and Special Training for parents, adoptive parents and foster parents of children with prenatal exposure to substances resulting in developmental delays and behavior issues. Childcare Assistance for families who earn between 140 and 185% of poverty is available through Empowerment to bridge the transition from assistance. Two parent resource centers have been developed in communities outside the metropolitan area as satellite sites for services and parent gatherings. Parent and preschool activities emphasizing literacy development for children 0-5 have been added to 18 elementary schools.

Public Awareness - We see a need for the community as a whole to understand the importance of the first years in later success. The community-wide education effort encourages all citizens to work together toward the goals of school readiness. Our public awareness component consists of billboards and television public announcement spots in addition to print media. A web site provides information about Empowerment and early childhood development.

Early Childhood Environment activities include the expansion of childcare. Funds to purchase equipment are available for centers to expand capacity. Certain areas of the county are targeted. Head Start programs have been expanded with Empowerment funds. Recognizing that centers and staff that are accredited have a documented higher level of quality, funds are available to assist in the fees involved in that process. In an effort to improve the quality of care in our existing centers, a series of training has been established regarding specific curriculum areas. Early childhood sites that send 50% of their staff to the training are then provided with new equipment selected to implement the training just received. Training and equipment were provided in the curriculum areas of infants and toddler care, Science for Preschoolers, Music and Blocks.

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

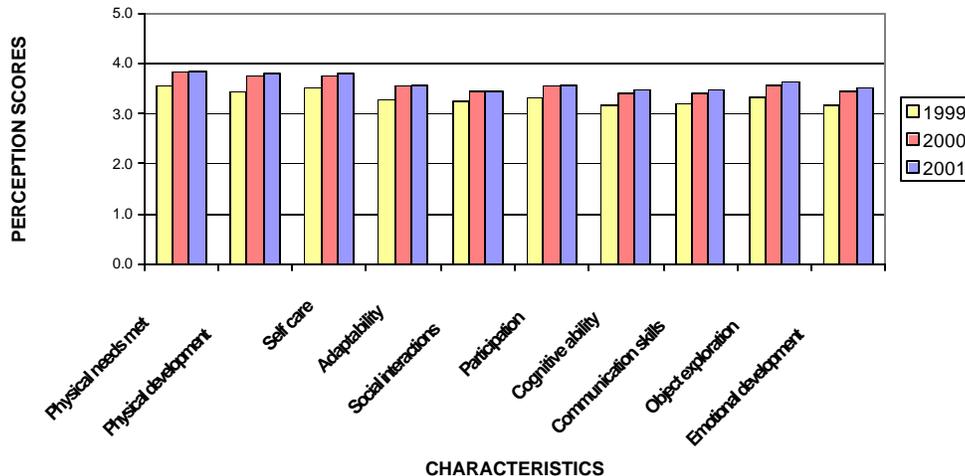
*In addition to state indicators, Empowerment funds are being used to address the following additional local key indicators:*

- Rate of infants born chemically exposed.
- Rate of children testing positive for lead.
- Number of families receiving subsidized day care assistance to work or attend school.
- Number of accredited child care facilities (centers and family day care homes)
- Number of childcare providers trained in brain research strategies.
- Number of all day, all year preschool slots for at risk children.
- Number of families with access to an adult mentor.
- Number of individuals indicating an increase in knowledge of early childhood issues.
- Number of family day care homes moving from non-registered to registered status.

**"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

All kindergarten teachers in Scott County have completed perception of readiness surveys on every child in kindergarten in 1999, 2000, and 2001. An increase in readiness as perceived by the teachers was noted each year on all of the ten characteristics assessed.

**KINDERGARTEN READINESS SURVEY DATA**



# STORY COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA

## “Community Planning for Children and Families”

### Counties in Area:

The Story County Empowerment Area serves all of the Story County community, which includes the following seven school districts: Ames, Collins-Maxwell, Colo-Nesco, Ballard-Huxley, Roland-Story, Gilbert, and Nevada.

### Contact for Area:

Annette M. Dunn, Coordinator  
Story County Empowerment Area  
126 South Kellogg, Suite 101  
Ames, Iowa 50010

Phone: 515-268-2276  
Fax: 515-296-2672  
Email: adunn1@dhs.state.ia.us

### Vision Statement:

The vision of the Story County Empowerment Area is to increase our capacity to care for one another and ourselves by working together through collaborative efforts. Initially, the county will focus on families with children, ages 0-5, to ensure they are ready to begin school.

### Mission Statement:

We believe that the Empowerment initiative will serve to support Story County’s mission to:

1. Integrate existing planning and funding efforts into a seamless, community-centered system.
2. Provide a vehicle for collaboration across a life-span approach service-delivery system.
3. Achieve accountability through measurable and meaningful outcomes.

### Overview of Community Plan

**Needs/Priority #1:** Provide affordable, quality and accessible early childhood experiences. Including child and infant childcare.

**Needs/Priority #2:** Provide educational training and support for parents and childcare providers.

**Needs/Priority #3:** Provide coordinated prenatal and postnatal services.

### Local Indicators:

Story County tracks these indicators from 1999 – 2002 as our indicators to be consistent with the state indicators. See annual report for indicator tracking results.

- Number of licensed child care centers.
- Number of registered family child care programs.
- Number of licensed preschools.
- Incidence of domestic violence.
- Incidence of child abuse cases accepted.
- Incidence of infants born affected by drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care in first trimester.
- Incidence of infants born of low and very low birthweight.
- Trend data on family poverty rate.
- Percentage of births to families without medical insurance.
- Immunization rate of county (starting at age 2).

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD (TANF)

Services Provided: The following is a summary of services provided and in development in Story County to address and enhance quality childcare capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment.

Emergency Assistance for Families Families whose income is below 185% of the federal poverty level are eligible. A simple application form is used to assess need and secure funds from the Center for Child Care Resources. Professional Development Child care center staff working with children 0-5 years located in Story County are eligible for participation in an eight-part training series during their first year of employment. Caregiver Mini Grants Childcare providers eligible for the professional development grants or those with at least three years of experience working in Story

County with children 0-5 years can apply. There are two programs co-funded by Early Childhood and School Ready dollars. The first program is Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency's Head Start Programs, which will be expanded to include additional children to the Head Start modeled program in Story City and Nevada communities. The second program is in the densely populated community of McCallsburg, it is a preschool and childcare program that is located in the school buildings. The staff is employed by the Colo-Nesco School District.

#### **SCHOOL READY**

Services Provided: The following are a summary of services provided and in development in Story County to address and enhance school-readiness issues.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a research-based, nationally acclaimed, early childhood family education and support program designed to help all parents give their children the best possible start in life. The program empowers families to recognize their strengths and become their child's first and most influential teacher. MELD New Parent and MELD Parents of Children with Special Needs are research-based and nationally acclaimed programs founded upon the philosophy that there is no one right way to parent—that parents need to decide based on up-to-date information and exploring alternative ideas in a supportive atmosphere of peers. The Family Nutrition Program assistant meets with participants one-on-one and in small groups for a minimum of six lessons. Research-based educational materials from Iowa State University are used to help families learn how to stretch their food dollars and make healthy food choices. Families strengthen communications, decision making, and problem solving skills. School Ready dollars support the Healthy Futures family program, based on a risk assessment and contains both family development and nursing components. The program provides nursing and family development services to new families to help them cope with the changes an infant brings to the family structure. Another School Ready funded service, located in the densely populated community of McCallsburg, is a preschool and childcare program that is located in the school buildings. The staff is employed by the Colo-Nesco School District (as mentioned above). The second preschool setting to be funded is the Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency's Head Start Programs, which will be expanded to include additional children to the Head Start modeled program in Story City and Nevada communities. Again, both of the preschool programs mentioned above are co-funded by Early Childhood dollars.

#### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The Empowerment Project maintains close communication and coordination with two local funding and planning initiatives, the Analysis of Social Service Evaluation Team (ASSET) and the Story County Decategorization Project, in regard to child welfare/juvenile justice issues and services in Story County. The ASSET process includes representation from Story County, the City of Ames, Story County United Way and the ISU Government of the Student Body and is responsible for making funding recommendations in children and family services of approximately \$1,600,000/year. As well, the Empowerment Coordinator is also the Decategorization Coordinator, which enhances the coordination and collaborative work done by the two state initiatives.

The Empowerment Area has considered contributing funds to the ASSET process but to date has not determined how that could occur. ASSET makes annual funding decisions in January prior to the new fiscal year and Decategorization is not aware of its next year's funding at that time in the fiscal period.

*By the end of FY02, Story County had an increase in the availability of licensed child care center slots for children by 33%. Along with this, Story County increased the number of preschool programs available to children by 50%. This is significant in the quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood experiences for the children in our area. Our goal is to then increase the ability of the children in Story County to be successful in school later in life*

# TAMA COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA



129 W. High Street, Toledo, IA 52342  
PH: (641) 484-4788 (or) 1-866-484-4788  
FAX: (641) 484-5447 e-mail: [tcphhc@tamacounty.org](mailto:tcphhc@tamacounty.org)

---

## Contact for Area:

Lori Johnson, Empowerment Coordinator  
Tama Co. Public Health & Home Care

## Vision & Mission:

The Tama County Empowerment Area (TCEA) believes that:

- It is the responsibility of the community to support families in raising their children. Experiences during the preschool years greatly influence individuals throughout their lives.
- Parents are the first and most important teachers and models for their children. Parents need information and support from the community in meeting the developmental needs of their children.
- Children need to be healthy in order to develop to their maximum potential.
- Children need safe, secure, supporting and nurturing environments in their own homes, childcare homes or childcare centers to develop their maximum potential.
- Children need enriching and stimulating experiences during the preschool years to develop their maximum potential and be ready for success in school.
- It is important to value and respect individuality and cultural/ethnic/racial diversity.
- All citizens regardless of socioeconomic status are entitled to quality education, health, and social services.
- Children and families need quality and affordable childcare services to benefit their maximum potential.
- Collaboration among service providers and families is necessary to maximize resources and assist families effectively and efficiently.
- Family centered support is essential in order to help families develop to their maximum potential.

The Tama County Empowerment Area partners are committed to working together and collaboratively developing a family centered support and service delivery system for children and families to help citizens lead happy, healthy and productive lives.

## Overview of Community Plan:

The program initiatives are to provide home visits and other support, to parents with newborns and give them parenting, health, and nutrition education. In the North Tama School District, we support Pied Piper Preschool & Childcare's efforts to increase enrollment with their preschool program. In the South Tama School District, we support Kids Corner's efforts to expand their facility to include infant care. We are working with Child Care Resource & Referral to assure that there are adequate childcare opportunities in our area.

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:

Attendance at our meetings has improved this year, even with reduction to every other month meetings. Empowerment board member turnover continues to be a concern and we feel fortunate to find people willing to volunteer their time and participate at the meetings.

This is the second year that we have received any School Ready funding. Home Visitation program has been implemented and expanded with the efforts from Tama County Public Health, ISU Extension, Mid-Iowa Community Action and AEA 6.

The Child Care Consultant has been able to increase the childcare provider possibilities, by one, in Tama County. Collaboration between ChildCare Consultant and development of the Health Consultant role has increased numbers and quality of childcare businesses.

We have successfully collaborated on sub-committees to determine how funding should be allocated and be fair with distribution. We consider "putting aside turf issues" a major accomplishment. Through the collaborative

efforts of the ChildCare Consultant, childcare center directors, and childcare home care providers; a childcare support group has been formed. Empowerment has made this possible.

Resources available in Tama County were not readily available. A sub-committee has worked on the compilation of this information and has produced a brochure/directory explaining what services are available. The directory is continuously reviewed.

A brochure explaining the services is available. Teaching components have been outlined and the curriculum has been developed to avoid duplication.

Empowerment has funded Parents as Teachers training for staff doing on-going home visits. Three members attended the Every Child Reads program, and have trained 12 home care providers.

On-going training is done at each meeting to provide the Empowerment Board the opportunity to learn about the different programs that are provided with the Empowerment Funding

| <b>Priority</b>  | <b>Services Provided</b>  | <b>Results/Indicators</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Priority #1 – Healthy Children</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prenatal/postnatal home visits for parents with newborns</li> <li>• Educational packet in English &amp; Spanish</li> <li>• HAWK-I Outreach</li> <li>• Lead Care Coordination</li> <li>• Preventative health care clinics</li> <li>• Parenting/nutrition educational home visits</li> </ul>   | <p>To Increase the Immunization &amp; Preventive Health Visit Percentages for the Birth to Five Population in Tama County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immunization compliance rate will increase from 74.85% to 90%</li> <li>• Increase number of children covered by HAWK-I by 10%</li> <li>• Increase screenings by 5% (35 children) and decrease high lead levels by 5% (9 children)</li> <li>• Knowledge of proper nutrition will increase as evidenced by pre and post survey.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Priority #2 Children Ready to Succeed in School</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pied Piper Preschool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of Tuesday/Thursday Teacher and Assistant (PM) – 16 slots for new children</li> <li>- Supplies for addition of classroom space</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Scholarships for preschool education</li> </ul>  | <p>Children will enter school ready for learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase preschool slots by 16 in one preschool</li> <li>• Increase attendance at remaining seven preschools by 5%</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Priority #3 Secure &amp; Nurturing Families</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Iowa Community Action Infant-Toddler Specialist trained in Parents As Teachers; program implemented.</li> <li>• Meskwaki Healthy Start trained in Parents As Teachers; program implemented.</li> </ul>   | <p>Parents will be actively involved in children's education through encouragement of early brain stimulation and increase in skill development with assistance from in-home workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase families knowledge by participating in parenting programs by 15% as evidenced by pre and post standardized survey.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Priority #4 Safe, Secure, Nurturing Childcare Environment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care Resource &amp; Referral will provide Support and resources to child care providers</li> <li>• Provider visitation program with program completion incentives.</li> <li>• Providers package (health &amp; safety materials)</li> <li>• Training for child care providers – group training</li> <li>• Training stipends to providers</li> <li>• Home Consultant &amp; travel</li> <li>• Mini grant coordination</li> <li>• Health Consultant &amp; travel</li> <li>• Child Care Specialist</li> <li>• Childcare scholarships</li> </ul> | <p>Children will have access to quality childcare in a nurturing, stable and safe environment within their home/community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase by 20%, licensed and/or registered childcare providers</li> <li>• Increase by 5%, alternative daycare.</li> </ul>   |



# Taylor County Community Empowerment

312 Main Street  
 Bedford, Iowa 50833  
 (712) 523-2137  
 Fax: (712) 523-2139  
[hlumbard@iastate.edu](mailto:hlumbard@iastate.edu)  
 Heidi Lumbard, Coord.

## Vision and Mission:

All families in Taylor County will have access to quality services to meet their physical, mental, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. The Empowerment Board believes through collaboration between agencies and the community, services can be provided that are comprehensive, integrated, and family centered. Through community partnering, barriers will be reduced to enable efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health and human services.

## Overview of Community Plan:

- ♦ All Children will enter school “ready to learn”.
- ♦ Access to a quality preschool experience for 100% of the children in Taylor County ages 3-5.
- ♦ 100% of all children in Taylor County ages 0-5 will participate in at least one Taylor County Community Empowerment Area program before age five.
- ♦ Promote projects that complement the current continuum of services to avoid duplication of effort.
- ♦ Assist programs that are family focused, sustain child care capacity, aid low-income families with children birth to five years old, increase school readiness, and promote healthy children and families.
- ♦ Promote collaborative and innovative problem-solving to meet the needs of our community.

## Local Priorities:

Taylor County Community Empowerment embraces the three main areas listed below serving families of children 0-5 within the school districts of Bedford, New Market, and Lenox.

| Preschool Opportunities  | Parent Education  | Quality Child Care   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Preschool availability for every child</li> <li>♦ Preschool opportunities for at-risk, underprivileged families</li> <li>♦ Optimize health services to all preschoolers</li> <li>♦ Optimize educational staff development for preschool teachers</li> <li>♦ Children Ready to Succeed in School</li> <li>♦ Improve language skills of second language learners</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Expansion of Parents as Teachers Program</li> <li>♦ Parent Education Classes available for every parent in Taylor County</li> <li>♦ Preschool outreach to parents</li> <li>♦ PAT outreach to preschools</li> <li>♦ Access to books by parents</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Culturally competent preschool to wrap around programs</li> <li>♦ Increase quality of child care</li> <li>♦ Increase education of child care providers</li> <li>♦ Increase capacity of child care</li> <li>♦ Increase parents ability to obtain or retain employment</li> <li>♦ Coordinate Wrap Around Care with Preschool</li> </ul> |

## Summary of Services and Successes:

### Tinker Tots Preschool



Tinker Tots Preschool expanded their preschool program to two age groups. This year they were at max staff ratio for the pre-kindergarten class. They are looking to have full enrollment next year too. Shown at left is one of the community orientation lessons of Tinker Tots Preschool.

Precious People Preschool expanded their capacity by 10 slots with the renovation of another room. This brings the total number of slots to 101, with 97 being filled between Precious People, Tinker Tots, and Head Start. All combined, the preschools are at 96% of full capacity. Shown at center, left is circle time at Precious People Preschool.

### Precious People Preschool



### Growing Strong Families



Growing Strong Families is a monthly home visitation program utilizing the Parents as Teachers, and Partnership for a Healthy Baby curriculum, along with other ISU Extension resources. Two parent educators conducted 648 visits, and served 95 families this past year. Shown at center, right is one of the new parent networking meetings conducted by Growing Strong Families.

### Quality Child Care



Maternal Child Health Home Visitation services includes a cadre of health related services for new moms, child care providers, and children 0-5. This new program now has two trained registered nurses that have served 20 child care providers, and 19 families with newborns.

Quality Child Care Program sponsors educational workshops once a quarter targeting child care providers, and day care centers. New this year, Empowerment was able to coordinate a Child Development Associate class. Three providers have completed the class, and five more will in FY03. Quality Child Care also works with the child care providers to coordinate wrap around service for those families that have children in preschool, and provide stipends to young families to help them obtain or retain employment. Shown at left are some children learning about dinosaurs at their child care provider's house. Over 35 children have benefited from the quality services they received from 13 registered/licensed providers.

## Union County Empowerment Area

### Contact for Area:

Sharon Booth  
Union County Empowerment Chairperson  
904 N. Vine  
Creston, IA 50801  
641-782-5807  
Email: rsb@mddc.com

Jody Green  
Union County Empowerment Coordinator  
1109 N. Lincoln  
Creston, IA 50801  
641-782-2443  
Email: jjgreen@mddc.com

### Vision Statement:

We empower our community to provide an environment in which all children 0-5 have the opportunity to grow to their fullest potential.

### Overview of Community Plan:

Through collaborative efforts the goal to build on family strengths, to identify needs, to remove barriers and to respond to gaps in services. Assessments have guided efforts to focus on current issues with emphasis on:

- & Promoting availability of services
- & Parenting education and support in non-traditional settings
- & Opportunity for all children to have quality and enriched experiences that enhance development
- & Recruiting and retaining qualified, nurturing childcare providers and educators
- & Services for sick child care

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

- & Children's Education
- & Parent Education and Support
- & Immunizations
- & New Parents and Babies
- & Quality Child Care Providers

### Local Indicators:

#### Early Childhood Programs

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| # of safety concerns noted in DHS spot checks                 | # of providers meeting NAEYC learning environment standards (+) |
| # of safety concerns noted in pre self-assessments (-)        | Learning opportunities offered to parents (+)                   |
| # of safety concerns rectified in post self-assessments (+) # | # of registered child care providers (+)                        |
| of child care providers participating in CCR&R (+)            | # of child care providers participating in CACFP (+)            |
| # of providers participating in the safety in-services (+)    | # of non-registered child care providers (-)                    |
| Training hours of child care providers (+)                    |   |

### School Ready Programs

|  |   |
|--|---|
| # of accredited child care centers/preschool environments                    | Rate of family conflict: % of founded child abuse         |
| <b># of accredited child providers (in-home)</b>                             | Time parents spend with child playing and reading         |
| Rate of poverty of children 0-5 (at or below 185% poverty)                   | % of 2 year olds immunized                                |
| % of parents attending parent teacher conference                             | # of immunization clinics                                 |
| # of parents enrolled in Parents As Teachers program                         | # of "uninsured" families served                          |
| Drop out rate  | Rate of births to mother under age 20                     |
| % of children with preschool experience                                      | Rate of major employers with optional leave for employees |
| % of fourth grade students reading at a proficient level                     | Rate of accessibility of child care for sick children     |
| % of parent using knowledge of development (self-assessment PAT)             | # of registered slots available and used                  |
| Referrals made to other community resources and followed up (Maternal Nurse) | Unemployment rate   |
|  | % of accredited home-based child care providers           |

### **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes:**

The Union County Empowerment Area Board operates with input from local programs, individuals, and Family T.I.E.S. (Taking Responsibility, Investing Resource, Encouraging Empowerment, Supportive Communities)

Union County Empowerment Board was able to assist 17 programs/agencies this year. Those programs/agencies that benefited from empowerment funding in Union County include the following: 5 preschool centers; Crisis Child Care; Union County Extension, including shopper supplement; Child Care Food Program, Child Care Accreditation, MATURA Action, including Car Seat Safety, The Family Rewards Program and early childhood programs through TANF funding; Conference speakers; Greater Community Hospital including Parents as Teachers, Maternal Child Health and Immunizations.

Union County Empowerment was also able to offer Preschool Scholarships to each preschool in Union County. Out of the seven preschools in Union County six of them utilized these funds to provide scholarships to students that otherwise would have been unable to attend preschool do to financial difficulties. The preschools reported that the families were very appreciative for the opportunity to receive these scholarships. The following quotations are from families benefiting from the preschool scholarships:

*"Thank you for giving my child the opportunity to attend a preschool of our choice."*

*"Because my son was given the opportunity to attend preschool, he has become more sociable and is no longer afraid to be away from me."*

*"Thanks so much Empowerment for helping us send our child to preschool."*

The success of this scholarship program has led to other Empowerment areas contacting Union County Empowerment about implementing similar programs.

# Warren County Empowerment

## Contact for Area:

Joy Rouse  
Iowa State Extension Service  
909 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Indianola IA 50125  
Phone 515/961-6237; FAX 515/961-6017; jmrouse@iastate.edu

## Vision and Mission:

The Warren County Empowerment Board proposes to develop and implement an initiative that will enable the collaborative effort of citizens and professionals to develop and utilize all the resources available to strengthen families and address the needs of parents and children in order to assure all children have the skills necessary to succeed in school.

## Overview of Community Plan:

Develop a coordinated, central point of entry for families with children under the age of five. This will be achieved through home visitation services to Warren County residents who have a newborn child. This project will help to ensure all children are healthy and all families are secure and nurturing.

Ensure Warren County parents with a child between the ages of birth and five have access to the Parents as Teachers program or other parent education opportunities. This will help to ensure all children are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in school and all families have securing and nurturing opportunities.

Increase both the quality and availability of child care options for Warren County families. This will ensure children of working parents have access to secure and nurturing opportunities.

Develop and implement ways to weave the 40 Developmental Assets for pre-schoolers into Warren County. This project enables all communities within Warren County to become safe and supportive.

## Local Indicators:

1. Children living at poverty level
2. Infant mortality
3. Child abuse/neglect
4. Parental responsibility is perceived as lacking
5. Children living with single parent, and that parent is in workforce
6. Low birth weight
7. Births to mothers under the age of 20 years
8. Children with FAS/ARND
9. Transient family system
10. Need for parental support and education
11. Lack of affordable, quality day care.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

Caring Connections is a home visiting program that gives parents the knowledge needed to make appropriate choices for their children. The program provides a mechanism for the early identification of children at risk for abuse, neglect, and developmental delays. Through early identification, children and families can be referred to appropriate services. During the initial visit, the home visiting nurse is responsible for evaluating each family's assets and areas of concern. The initial home visit consists of a general health assessment of infant education and instruction on infant care, a social assessment of the environment, and the risk potential for child abuse or neglect and information about valuable resources available in Warren County. The parent has the opportunity to participate in this program until the child reaches age 5. In subsequent visits the nurse will provide health assessments, discuss feeding concerns, evaluate home safety and environment, provide education regarding care for age of child including education about the 40 Assets of Development for infants, refer the family to appropriate community resources, perform the Denver Developmental Screening, provide **nutritional** education and evaluate the home for potential child abuse and neglect. The program is free to every Warren County resident.

Parents as Teachers is a program that is a home based early childhood/parent education program focusing on teaching parents about normal child development, age appropriate expectations of children, and effective forms of behavior management. Each family participating in the PAT program typically receives a home visit from a trained parent educator on a monthly basis. The parent educator brings parent handouts pertaining to the child's age and stage of development, an interactive activity for the parent and child to engage in, and a book to read to the child. The parent educator may also bring additional resource materials if requested by the parent.

Wee Care Nursery offers a free, state licensed nursery for 19 children per session. The program is open to children between the age of six weeks through kindergarten. For many children, Wee Care is the only opportunity they will have to participate in a structured learning environment prior to attending kindergarten. The program offers a temporary break for high risk, stressed parents. In addition, parenting classes are offered quarterly and resources related to parenting are offered on a continuous basis.

The 40 Developmental Assets for PreSchooler Project works with identified building blocks of healthy development from the Search Institute. The program works to assist young people to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. Building assets requires consistent messages across a community. Training and/or inservice workshops will be conducted in a collaborative effort with businesses, schools, churches, DHS, police/sheriff, childcare givers, and local human service groups throughout the Warren County area.

Training was provided for Child Care Resource and Referral and Caring Connections staff using Technical assistance dollars.

Providers were offered training by Child Care Resource and Referral staff and Parents as teachers. Incentives and minigrants were offered to improve the quality of care. Home visits were conducted to promote age appropriate activities. Staff offered technical assistance to providers. The home consultant assists with getting home registered with the Department of Human Services.

Child care assistance was offered to families that were changing jobs, looking for a new job or had health emergencies. Students at the alternative school were offered assistance with child care.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Identifying Warren County births is a crucial step for the Caring Connections program. This is an on-going collaborative effort with the Polk County Recorder’s office (since the main hospitals are in Polk County), the WIC program, Social Workers at each of the Des Moines hospitals, private physicians, local Maternal Health program, local DHS workers, and using the newspaper.

A beautiful handmade baby quilt and fresh roses are given to each newly admitted family. WC Piecemakers Quilting Guild makes and donates each unique quilt and Ruth’s Flower Shop gives a 50% discount on the roses. At the six-month visit a sippy cup is given which Drug Town gives a 25% discount; a child’s board book is given at the annual visit and the Indianola Public Library gives a 40% discount. This past year, these supportive efforts saved the program \$3,178!

Caring Connections has also received financial support from Warren County Farm Bureau with a \$700 one-time grant and \$150 from the Indianola Odd Fellows.

Working in a collaborative effort with the Indianola Public Library on new quarterly workshops to help promote reading and awareness of the Caring Connections program, the Library has donated meeting rooms for these free workshops.

Caring Connections had a very successful second year. Total net births identified are 644 with 181 families participating in the program. All 181 received referrals to PAT, information on Warren County services and information as needed to Wee Care, HAWK 1 and other services. These families also were verbally taught about child abuse/neglect and associated risk factors. All 644 received information on Caring Connections and pertinent child care and safety information.

Wee Care Nursery began twelve years ago, serving Warren County families with children 6 weeks through Kindergarten. Each year we serve more families, all free of charge. This past fiscal year 249 children in 160 families were served. We normally see 95 children per week! For the majority of our children and parents we offer them the first experience for the child being without the parents and sometimes the only experience before starting school. Many children come as referrals from the Area Education Agency, Public Health nurse, Caring Connections, Parents as Teachers, Christian Opportunity Center, Crisis Care, D.H.S., local doctors and schools. We are the only nursery of our kind in the county and are open year round, which is especially important to those families with special needs children. We have dedicated staff that are available to the families seven days a week to answer questions or help them locate a service. Volunteers are also greatly utilized, 106 volunteers donated 360 hours of direct care to the children and 333 hours of indirect service to the program last year. A whopping 8,634 hours of loving care was given to those the children. This program always ranks in the top first or second spot statewide to similar programs. We are very proud of the success of the program.

Child Care Resource and Referral of Warren County recruited 16 new providers, which attended an information meeting. Twelve participated in a ten part ChildNet series (bonus was provided for those that completed the series and became certified). Scholarships were available for providers attending state and regional conferences, and CPR/First aid. Seven families were eligible to have eight weeks of supported child care at a registered home. Thirty providers and four centers received grants to make improvements in their business. Staff made 44 visits motivated providers to implement developmental appropriate activities for children in their care. This project served more than 200 children. Six hundred eighty four providers attended workshops and eleven different topics during the year. Child Care Resource and referral collaborated with Iowa State University Extension, AEA, Public Health, DHS, Prevention Concepts, and the American Red Cross.

To date, as of June 30, 2002, Warren PAT has three Parent Educators who are serving 103 families.

Warren PAT has served 123 families during the past 12 months. PAT has a retention rate of 84%. Of the families who enroll, 84% remain in the program. The total number of children being served is 159 – ages 0-3, 89 children and age 3-5, 70 children. During the program year, Educators report that 186 children received at least one visit.

The number of families who are enrolled in both Caring Connections and Parents as Teachers totals 15. This is 14.5% of the total of 103 families enrolled in PAT. Fourteen of the parents enrolled in PAT are teen parents.

The technical assistance grant received from the Empowerment Board enabled county wide (Warren County) training on the 40 Assets researched by the Search Institute. The Search Institute has identified assets or building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible. The Warren County Action Council provided training by James Vollbrach, about the assets to leaders in schools, cities, faith communities, business communities, and the communities at large in hopes that awareness would create a “Warren County for a Better Future”. The action council wants to involve people from all parts of the community in shaping and coordinating strategies that will help all young people be more likely to succeed. In addition to the training, the action council is preparing monthly news ads (coordinated with Character Counts) highlighting a different asset.

Partners in this effort were: United Way, ISU Extension, USDA Rural Development, Prevention Concepts, Indianola Community Schools, Warren County Department of Human Services, DECAT, WLOC, Chamber of Commerce, Child Abuse Prevention Council of Warren County, City of Indianola, Red Rock Community Action Program.

# WASHINGTON COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA

## “LIFT-off “ - (LIVING INVOLVES FAMILIES TOGETHER)

### Counties in Area:

Washington County Empowerment serves the entire Washington County area and all school districts where the central office is located within the Washington County boundaries or by request from an adjoining school district to join this Empowerment Area, subject to Board approval.

### Contacts for Area:

### Vision & Mission:

All individuals within the Washington County Empowerment Area will have a community that values and provides the opportunity to maximize their potential in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment, through partnering and collaborative efforts.

### Overview of Community Plan:

The long-term goal of Washington County LIFT-off is to develop a Family Service Center. The Center would provide a central location for families, with children ages' birth through 5 years, to receive a variety of services. It is the goal of LIFT-off that multiple agencies will participate in the delivery of services at the Family Service Center. The Center would have three main priorities: 1. family health; 2. child development; and 3. parental support and education. Focusing on these three priorities will assist in achieving the prescribed results as set out by the legislature: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families, and secure and nurturing child care environments. Until funds are available for the development of the Family Service Center, various programs will be funded to initiate early childhood services from multiple entities not co-located.

### Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:

#### *Mini-grants for day care providers (\$500 maximum per provider)*

Assistance is provided to registered or licensed day care providers to improve the quality of day care by purchasing equipment or educational materials.

#### *Provider Education*

Training sessions provided free of charge to providers through utilization of funding for speakers/food/space.

#### *Transportation Assistance*

Vouchers available to families with children, age 0-5 years, who have identified transportation as a barrier for child care/preschool and meet financial guidelines

#### *Parents as Teachers Home Visitor Program (0-3years)*

Home visitor program targeting any parent/caregiver of child 0-3 years to enhance parenting skills and evaluate developmental progress. 1<sup>st</sup> priority given to teen moms, newborns, and 1<sup>st</sup> time moms. Staffing includes Coordinator and 4 trained PAT staff, including a social worker, a public health nurse, and two early childhood specialists. Funding covers salaries, supplies, fiscal administration, clerical support, and training costs.

#### *Healthy Child Care Iowa Position (HCCI)*

This part-time RN position is a liaison for day care providers for identification/ implementation of training needs, assistance with health and safety issues, and care coordination services for children who need to access health services. Funding covers salary, incentives for providers, and educational materials.

#### *Preschool Scholarships*

Funding is provided for families to send their children to preschool, if they meet income eligibility guidelines up to and including 200% of poverty. Applications required. Committee approval is needed for funding to be issued directly to the preschool.

## **Local Indicators:**

### **Family Health**

- 2 #/% of children enrolled in Medicaid / hawk-I
- 2 % of 2 year old children up to date with immunizations

### **Child Development**

- 2 #/% of children entering school with preschool experience
- 2 # of preschool slots available
- 2 # of children accessing subsidized public transportation to preschool/daycare
- 2 Increased number of parents demonstrating appropriate parenting skills as measured by PAT pre/post test

### **Parental Support & Education**

- 2 #/% of families accessing PAT home visiting program
- 2 # of participants in parent/child play groups
- 2 rate of child abuse/neglect
- 2 # of registered child care providers
- 2 # of licensed child care providers
- 2 # of registered child care slots
- 2 # of licensed child care slots
- 2 # of day care providers participating in HCCI training sessions
- 2 # of providers participating in 5-step HCCI educational program

## **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results, Successes:**

- Parents as Teachers links with many existing programs in the county in order to identify parents with children, 0-3 years. Examples of this include prenatal classes at the local hospital, Strengthening Families program, preschools, DHS, alternative high school, public library, Public Health programs (WIC and Maternal Child Health), service organizations, physicians' offices and OB personnel at hospitals. The success of this program is evident as there is a waiting list for families to be enrolled and all PAT staff have full caseloads.
- Healthy Child Care Iowa position links with 4C's – Johnson County, CCR&R, DHS, day care providers, PAT home visitor program, preschools, AEA staff, Public Health, Washington Community Y, business & industry, and Chamber of Commerce.
- Transportation subsidy program has worked closely with the Mini-Bus, Washington County's transportation system.
- Preschool Scholarship subcommittee has worked with existing preschools and representatives from education in all communities to enhance children's access to preschool experiences.
- Washington County Empowerment is experiencing success with existing programs and looking forward to working on additional projects in the future. New collaboratives are being formed as providers, agencies, and citizens work together. A comprehensive county-wide needs assessment is being conducted to identify other perceived needs and/or gaps in service. A county plan will be the result of this activity.

## Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (SHIP)

### Counties in Area:

Woodbury County.

### Contact for Area:

John F. Calhoun

Address: 1520 Morningside Ave., Sioux City, Iowa 51106

Phone: 712-274-6000 Fax : 712-274-6115

E-Mail: [calhounj@po2.aea12.k12.ia.us](mailto:calhounj@po2.aea12.k12.ia.us)

Web: [www.siouxlandship.org](http://www.siouxlandship.org)

### Vision and Mission:

#### *Early Childhood Vision*

Guided by current research on brain development and supported through meaningful collaboration, our community will provide opportunities for children 0 to 8 to be healthy and ready to learn.

#### *Early Childhood Mission*

To strengthen, support and empower children and families through access to quality community services.

### Overview of Community Plan:

All of the programs and services provided under this plan are specifically tied to achieving positive results and outcomes related to our established priorities at the local level, which directly relate to the State Indicators identified by the Iowa Empowerment Board. In this plan we outline a series of programs and services that are based upon a consensus of local early childhood experts within Woodbury County. The Woodbury County Early Childhood plan has been focused on the 0 to 8 population. However, this application specifically focuses on the State of Iowa identified population of 0 to 5.

The development of the Rural and Urban Family Resource and Referral Centers and the In Home Visitation Services is provided participating families with nutrition education. Although the focus of the programs provides children ages 0 to 5, nutrition education is provided to the parents of those children. This education has a positive affect on the children currently in the household and also helps to reduce the number of low birth weight babies born to the parents participating in these programs. Another main focus of these programs is to gain established medical homes for the children ages 0 to 5. If the children and families have established medical homes the rate of immunization by age 2 will greatly increase.

The goal for the Woodbury County School Ready Plan is to have children entering kindergarten ready for school through prior preschool/group experience. This is the focus for the Rural and Urban Family Resource Centers and the public awareness, education and forums conducted by members of the Early Childhood Committee.

**Local Indicators:**Healthy Children:

1. # of children with established medical homes
2. # of children with established dental homes
3. # of children with medical insurance
4. # of identified at-risk families accessing the early intervention program

Children Ready to Succeed in School:

1. # of children entering kindergarten who have had pre-school/group experiences
2. # of licensed child care center/preschool slots
3. # of infants served in child care centers or registered child care homes

Safe and Nurturing Families:

1. # of families participating in family support services

Secure and Nurturing Childcare Environments:

1. # of accredited childcare centers
2. # of registered child care homes

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding:**

The primary services provided for in the Early Childhood plan have focused on increasing the availability of quality child care. Proposals have been requested and implemented to provide scholarships for licensed child care to children of families that are within the 140 to 185% of poverty. SHIP has also provided funding to increase the quality of child care by offering funds for professional development of child care workers. In addition, the board has awarded funds for Rural and Urban Resource and Referral Centers. Funding has also been provided to increase the number of infant care openings within the County and extended day care.

**“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

SHIP has formed many partnerships within the Early Childhood community including Success By 6®, HOPES and Shared Visions. Success By 6® is an early childhood development model created by the Mobilization for America’s Children and adopted by local United Ways and Communities across the country. Success By 6® has been engaged to serve as the review committee for all Early Childhood programs and has also agreed to provide the Marketing for the Early Childhood Plan. A formal memorandum of agreement has been developed and the new combined collaborative is called Success By 6® and Beyond. Success By 6® and Beyond has initiated involvement in the Imagination Library through the Dollywood Foundation. This project will allow all children born in Sioux City hospitals to receive a book a month for 5 years. Success By 6® and Beyond will utilize the Every Child Reads team to serve as the evaluation component of this program. Additional success includes the partnership with the HOPES providers within the County. HOPES will also provide the coordination for the rural and urban resource centers to ensure the elimination of duplication. Success By 6® and Beyond is currently working to initiate an early childhood endowment fund. The endowment fund will provide funding for services in a tri-state area and include two other empowerment areas. SHIP has also assisted in facilitating the involvement 5 Empowerments with Early Access.